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PUBLISHER TO THE

UNIVERSITY

ESSAYS AND STUDIES

BY MEMBERS OF

THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

VOL. XVII

COLLECTED BY W. H. HADOW

OXFORD

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1932

THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

President 1931.

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POETRY AND SCIENCE

MY subject is poetry and science ; not the science of poetry which, I suppose, would be a fair description of the activity called criticism—at any rate, when criticism is scientifically exercised ; nor the poetry of science, either in the contemplation of that picture of the universe in its multiform majesty which science now presents to us, or in the expression of man's admiration that may find its utterance in rhythmical forms, as when a Lecturer in Physics at Cambridge is reported to have lapsed into the metre of *In Memoriam*, saying :

And so no force however great,
Can stretch a cord however fine
Into a horizontal line
Which shall be absolutely straight.

What I am concerned about is the relation between two fundamental and fundamentally different activities of the human mind. I believe it to be of some importance to our own appreciation of the real value of science and of poetry or art that we should define to ourselves, at least in some degree, the real characteristics of both. They will, in practice, considerably overlap from time to time, but that is never any reason for doubting the value of a general definition. It is repeatedly true that the principles which we distinguish from one another are operative at the same time in the practical world. For example, people distinguish sharply between competition and co-operation. One of the commonest mistakes made by students of social and economic questions is to suppose that because these principles are opposites, therefore if you adopt one you must exclude the other. But everybody who has played a game of football ought to know that is not true ; because the way in which you play a game of football is that two sides of fifteen people—if it is the right kind of football—co-operate to enjoy a game ; and the way they

co-operate is to compete against one another ; and within each team they are co-operating in order to compete effectively ; and each member of one team or of the other is competing with all the other members of the team to be the best co-operator in competing against the other team for the co-operative fun of the game. If that is true in such an elementary thing as a game of football, we must expect to find, when we study the activities of men either on the intellectual or on the practical plane, that principles entirely distinct in themselves and in their definition may be operative together, and that the richness of human life partly depends upon bringing them all into play, each in its right place. The reason for trying to secure that our definition of them is really exact is not in order that we may choose one to the exclusion of another, but in order to secure that, when they are combined, they are combined in the right proportion and in the right order.

As I speak about poetry and science it is likely to become apparent that I am very ignorant of science ; whether I know much about poetry or not, at least I am fond of it. But there is no intention in my mind of suggesting that one of these things is better than the other. Human life needs both. But if we understand what each is, we may be able to combine them in the richness of human life more wisely than if we never inquire what are their distinctive natures.

I take for the text of what I wish to say to you the remark of Coleridge on this subject, where he says that the opposite of prose is not poetry but verse, and the opposite of poetry is not prose but science. You see at once what he means. Prose and verse are both terms referring to the rhythm in which the words used are arranged. If the rhythm is very marked and regular you have verse. If it is less regular and still marked you have a kind of prose which is near to verse ; if it is perceptible, but without regularity, you have literary prose ; and if there is no rhythm to be detected at all—though I suppose it is quite inconceivable that there ever is no rhythm whatever—then you have prose pure and simple. There are passages written in prose which have all the essence

of poetry, as witness many of the great passages in the Bible, and there are passages written in verse which are undoubtedly not poetry. But when Coleridge goes on to say that the opposite of poetry is science he is urging us to use the word poetry as representing not so much a form of composition as a way of experiencing the world which naturally finds its expression in either rhythmical prose or that still more fully ordered rhythm which is called verse, while science is altogether another way of experiencing the world. It represents a different habit of mind. No doubt Coleridge might have said that the opposite of science was art rather than poetry, and it may be it would have been more accurate if I had taken as the title of this discourse 'Science and Art'. But there is a convenience about using poetry to represent art in general, because a lecturer can only give one kind of illustration of art, and that is such art as uses language as its medium, as the art of painting uses line and colour and the art of music uses sound.

Now, when we consider great works either of science or of art that have appeared in the history of mankind, we are immediately struck with this fact, that ancient science is out of date and ancient poetry is not. The way in which the scientist studies the world leads him to an apprehension of it which supersedes the apprehension of his predecessors. No one who desires fully to understand astronomy at the present time feels himself under any obligation to begin by mastering the Ptolemaic system. There was, of course, a science of astronomy worked out in great detail and enabling men to predict the course of events in the heavens, based on the supposition that the earth is, as at first sight it appears to be, the centre of the system. Copernicus and Galileo adopted the other hypothesis, that the sun is the centre, at least of that system to which our planet primarily belongs; and I believe that scientists are agreed in saying that the only reason for preferring the heliocentric astronomy is that it is simpler. The courageous (to use no more offensive term) dogmatism of those who assure us in defiance of the plain evidence of our senses, that the earth does really go round the

sun, when everybody can see the sun going round the earth, for no other reason than that it makes their calculations simpler, leaves the mere theologian gasping. However, you will agree with me that no modern astronomer studies the works of Ptolemaic astronomy with a view to understanding modern astronomical science. —

On the other hand, if you want fully to understand the meaning of modern poetry you must know something of ancient poetry ; but that is not all, for when you go back to find the origins of poetry, it may be with a view to understanding better the poetry of to-day, you discover that the earliest poetry you can find is as great as any that has ever been composed. Ancient poetry is never out of date. We need to come to it not only because in some degree it helps us to understand the poetic forms of later ages, including our own, but because it is itself a thing of permanent excellence and delight.

The subjects of the greatest poetry hardly vary ; the treatment of them hardly varies. Originality comes in saying something that the whole human race has felt in such a way that once again the heart of man knows that it has found worthy and adequate expression of its feeling. The sorrow of a child for a broken doll, the anguish of those who are bereft by the ravages of war, the disappointment of love's hopes and the ecstasy of their fulfilment—these are the things which in all ages make the stuff of poetry, and the expression of them, when it has once been felt as adequate at all, is felt as adequate for ever. To this moment, if we want to enter into the meaning of all the depths of the pathos of human life, we shall find it nowhere more worthily expressed than in the scene where Priam visits Achilles in his tent to beg the corpse of Hector in the last Book of the *Iliad*.

Ancient poetry is not out of date, and we must hope that our further study of the nature of science and poetry may help us to understand why it is that ancient science is superseded and ancient poetry is not.

Secondly, science as it advances seems to become increasingly remote from ordinary and everyday experience. We

must suppose that the most recent science is also scientifically the most adequate; and indeed that supposition is verified by experience, as we find that through acting upon the theories put forward we are able to control the forces of nature or to predict what they will bring to us. But the ordinary man can hardly even frame a notion what it is that the modern scientist is talking about. We are told, for example, that in the science of optics and the study of light it is, for the moment at any rate, necessary to proceed on two quite contradictory theories at the same time, and that there are some effects which can only be accounted for by one and some only by the other, though they cannot both be true at once. Again the innocent theologian, who is supposed to have done much to mystify mankind, is left gasping. And the whole recent electrical theory of matter, with which most of us have tried to become superficially acquainted, leaves us with a picture of the world so extraordinarily unlike the world of our ordinary experience that it is difficult for us to relate the two together. Science becomes so departmentalized as it advances, specialization to so great a degree is necessitated by its increasing complexity and the range of its ramifications, that the ordinary man can do very little except listen to those lecturers who are most apt with illustrations, and give up the rest. But this science goes on vindicating itself; it goes on proving both its truth and its utility in the practice of life.

Of poetry it remains true that, while I suppose the greatest poetry always contains very much that the ordinary man never appreciates, yet if the ordinary man finds nothing in it to value we most of us agree in saying it cannot be the very greatest kind of poetry. Certainly it is true that the famous poetic dramas which have been acclaimed as the greatest are those which have also had on the whole the widest appeal to ordinary humanity. Of course, that does not mean—I merely insert this to avoid misunderstanding—that what we look for in poetry is mere reproduction of average experience. There is a good deal of confusion of thought, as it seems to me, on this point. I have heard people complain that, for example, it must be wrong to write plays in blank verse because people

do not talk in blank verse. Well, I do not want to go to the theatre to hear how people talk outside the theatre. I can hear that without breathing a stuffy atmosphere or paying for a ticket. What I want personally when I go to the theatre is to hear from the stage words, accompanied by appropriate acting, which genuinely express those deep emotions that our ordinary language quite as much conceals. I do not for one moment suppose that Mark Antony, when he sailed away from the Battle of Actium, actually said, 'Unarm, Eros, the long day's task is done'. He is much more likely to have said something like, 'Well, that's that.' But those words do not express the reality of the situation; and one of the reasons why we use expressions of that sort is that they do not express it; for we do not want to express it. Over and over again in real life we could not bear to have the reality of the situation adequately expressed; it would be too poignant. But what we want the poet to do for us, or any other artist who analyses human emotions, is to give us some utterance which really does express what we know to be feelings worthy of the occasion, even though in real life the actor would take very great pains to avoid expressing them. So when we say that dramatic art, for example, should be true to nature, what I should like this phrase to mean is not that the actors speak on the stage as they speak off the stage, but that they speak in such a way as genuinely reveals the appropriate emotions; and the moment you ask for language that shall genuinely reveal deep emotion you find yourself involved in poetry, and for the matter of that, in the forms of speech that are appropriate to poetry, that is, in rhythmical forms of speech, for the first thing that strong emotion demands for its expression is rhythm.

Let us go a little further—from the works of art to the activity of mind which issues in them. Science has its being in a perpetual mental restlessness. Of every event or occurrence it would ask 'Why?'; and so soon as the answer is given it asks 'Why?' again. You never reach the end of its inquiry. It is always moving on from one stage to the next. It tries to understand its object by a double process, partly by setting

it in an ever expanding context, so that you see it in relation to a greater and greater part of the whole range of human experience; partly by breaking it up into its own component elements, so that you are embarking upon a process of apparently endless analysis. You want to understand in a physical object why it is where it is, or why it has the shape it has, and you are involved in an inquiry which will not cease until you have compassed the heavens with the help of the most complete astronomy that you can find, or broken up that object into its molecules, its atoms, its electrons, its protons, and now, to be up to date, its neutrons; ultimately, indeed, if you follow the guidance of some of those who seem to have stepped beyond pure physics into what should, more accurately than most of the disquisitions actually so named, be called metaphysics, you treat the whole thing as convolutions of space-time. (I do not know what that means, but it is a set of sounds which I have heard many learned people make.) By this kind of perpetual restlessness you are always relating one thing to another, moving from one point to another, always tracing out the connexions of elements supposed to constitute a system.

Aesthetic appreciation, on the other hand, the kind of understanding to which art leads, is achieved through an activity of concentrated repose. You take the object in question and fix your attention upon it to the exclusion of all else. You seek to understand it, not by setting it in a perpetually wider context, not so to speak from outside by all its external references, but from within, by entering deeply into its own nature as it stands there before you. I imagine that everybody who has ever been caught by the spirit of beauty into any really deep enjoyment of it has been conscious of an experience in which there seems to be no longer any process of time. It may be that the work in question is one to which the process of time is indispensable, as it is for example to drama or music, in contrast with painting or sculpture. None the less it is not of the passage of time that you are conscious, but of the movement of all that process as a single unit; it is a movement within the artistic

apprehension to which I am coming back in a moment. Surely every one is conscious of having been, at some time or another, so rapt out of himself by great drama or great music that he has become entirely oblivious of the passage of time in the ordinary sense; he has become simply a centre of consciousness upon which the drama or the music has been playing. There is a mental activity in the appreciation of art as intense as there is in any scientific undertaking. But it is an activity of reception; we seek to leave ourselves, as far as ever we may, passive in the hands of the work of art, or, perhaps more accurately, of the artist as through his work he exercises his spell upon us. ✓

Most people have noticed that a view appears more beautiful when seen framed between trees, or when caught as it were within the span of an arch. I think the reason for that is not that the view itself is different, but that the frame of trees or of the outline of the arch assists concentration of attention, so that we really look upon it with a degree of intensity which it is very difficult to bring to bear so long as there is the possibility of the mind straying from that part of the landscape to everything which surrounds it. I believe, indeed, that this is the fundamental secret of the artistic unities. For, in order that the work of art may in this way lay its claim upon our attention so as to fix us in the simplicity of contemplation, it must have unity within itself. There are some pictures, for example, full of beauty, which are not quite beautiful pictures. Some here are no doubt familiar with Botticelli's great Coronation of the Madonna—a scene in the heavens of great beauty, where the Madonna is being crowned, circled round with exquisitely lovely angels, while below upon the earth are four saints, again most striking figures, in adoration. But between there is a gap, and the connexion between the upper and the lower parts of the picture is purely intellectual or scientific. You know in fact that these saints are adoring the figure above, but there is nothing in the picture to make you see them both together; in fact, it is rather difficult to see them both together; you have to look at the top and then at the bottom to grasp them

together, but you do not behold them together. In the greatest pictures, by skill in grouping, the lines are so arranged that, so far as the eye moves, it is guided to move in such a way that there is never a break at any point between one subject and another, with the result that the mind receives the effect of complete unity; the eye is drawn by the skill of the painter along lines which seem to be in constant motion, yet in unbroken repose.

You find the same very often in music. I know, of course, that as soon as you illustrate you expose yourself both to the contempt and to the indignation of people who disagree with you. But may I suggest that Chopin is a composer whose works are full of beauty and yet never quite beautiful, because they are strictly incoherent? There is one pleasant theme followed by another pleasant theme; each while it lasts is very nice; but at the end you feel almost that any other of his themes might have occurred in that work. It is the same in Emerson's Essays. I wonder if any one here has ever tried to look up a reference in those Essays. As soon as you do that, you become aware that any sentence might just as well have occurred in any other essay as fitly as where it does. I remember remarking as a boy to the late Lord Rosebery that I greatly enjoyed reading Emerson. 'Do you?' he said, 'I don't. It is like swallowing wooden beads.' Most of the things Emerson said might just as well have been said in any other order. You only get the greatest effects where the mind is held gripped in a stillness which it does not wish to break, however great the multiplicity of the subjects which are introduced to it.

I have spoken of that very briefly in relation to painting and to music, but, as I have said, if one is to illustrate works of art in the course of a lecture it must needs be by poetry. Now I believe that the reason why poets write in verse is precisely the same as the reason why painters frame pictures. The function of the frame on a picture is quite plainly to stop your attention from wandering past the picture to other things; it is to facilitate concentration of interest upon the picture itself, and therefore something which is not positively

discordant, but which is completely irrelevant, is put right round the picture so as to hold the attention in. Emotion, I have said, requires rhythm, but what we find when we turn to the poets is that not where emotion is strongest rhythm is most marked, but rather the contrary.

The rhythm is most marked in the works of great poets where the subject is not such as would of itself fasten the attention; but where the subject is one that of itself will grip the attention, then an elaborate metre becomes rather intrusive. You no longer need its assistance to hold your attention concentrated, and, because you do not need it, it becomes a redundancy. As the emotion deepens the rhythm tends to verge off in the direction of prose.

Now it is obviously true that by a careful selection of instances you can prove anything, and you must discount as much as you like the effect of the instances I offer you, but I offer them at any rate in all sincerity. I do not think that it would be easy to most of us, when sitting indoors with the curtains drawn, to fasten our attention for any length of time with complete fixity upon an imaginary cloud; if that is to be done, the restlessness of the mind and the inquiring or scientific faculties must be a little bit lulled to sleep. So when Shelley wants to do that for you, and to fix your mind upon the cloud, he adopts a kind of see-saw rhythm, which, while it does not send you to sleep in any physical sense, none the less is I think deliberately soporific to the critical faculties. I should like to offer you the whole poem in illustration of my point, but perhaps the last three stanzas are enough:

That orb'd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,

When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl ;
The volcanos are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.

From cape to cape with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent of sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.

The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow ;

The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky ;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;
I change but I cannot die.

For after the rain, when with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams,
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

I think anybody can detect in that miracle of rhythm and interlacing rhyme the value of the see-saw effect and of the frequency of the rhymes, and the way in which the mind is as it were perpetually hedged in by the repetitions of sound. The point on which thought is to be concentrated is rather a small area, and therefore the devices to keep it fixed must be rather elaborate ; otherwise it will stray.

But that kind of elaboration, with rhymes at very short intervals and the like, would be out of place where the subject is of itself graver, and of concern as it were to a greater

area of the mental faculty. A good example of the middle stage in the complexity of rhythm is given by the Spenserian stanza; only if you are going to concern yourself with the Spenserian stanza, do it in the works of Spenser rather than in Byron, who seems to me to have made a mess of it. There you have what is in itself a very intricate system of rhymes. If I were asked to write out the prosody of a Spenserian stanza I could not do it except by repeating one, and, as it were, marking it off as it went by; that means to say that the system of its structure is not very obvious, and yet it is fairly elaborate. And I believe it is that quality of elaboration without obtrusiveness which enables Spenser to hold your mind throughout the immense length of 'The Faerie Queene' without at any stage incurring weariness. Those who remember the Spenserian rhythm will again see its appropriateness for holding attention through a long period on subjects that are not intensely exciting and yet are always sufficiently interesting to make you glad that your attention is fixed upon them. If one wants an illustration perhaps that unfinished Canto printed at the end is as good as anything else. I suppose it was composed as a conclusion of the poem:

When I bethinke me on that speech whyleare
 Of Mutability, and well it way,
 Me seemes that though she all unworthy were
 Of the Heav'ns Rule; yet, very sooth to say,
 In all things else she bears the greatest sway:
 Which makes me loath this state of life so tickle,
 And love of things so vaine to cast away;
 Whose flowring pride, so fading and so fickle,
 Short Time shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle.

Then gin I think on that which Nature sayd,
 Of that same time when no more Change shall be,
 But stedfast rest of all things, firmly stayd
 Upon the pillours of Eternity,
 That is contrayr to Mutabilitie;
 For all that moveth doth in Change delight:
 But thence-forth all shall rest eternally
 With Him that is the God of Sabbaoth hight:
 O, thou great Sabbaoth God, grant me that Sabbath's sight!

But where a man is really deeply stirred, even that kind of rhythm will be out of place, and nothing will do but rhythmical prose, or that blank verse which is almost like rhythmical prose and, in the hands of its greatest masters, merely maintains just a sufficient reiteration of its *ictus* to keep the mind throbbing, as it were, in unison with the emotion that is expressed, but is hardly perceptible in its division into lines. Just for the sake of symmetry, but nothing more, where so many illustrations will occur, I take the speech of Macbeth when he hears of his wife's death :

She should have died hereafter ;
There would have been a time for such a word.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time ;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out brief candle !
Life's but a walking shadow ; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more : it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

As we watch the development of Shakespeare's genius it is very remarkable to see how steadily he became freer and freer in the use of his metrical form, so that while in his earlier plays, even when passion was strong, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, he writes very regular verse, frequently ending a speech with a rhyming couplet, he moves to increasing elasticity, until in *Antony and Cleopatra* the verse has become a perfectly responsive instrument, hardly insisting upon its metrical structure at all, and yet always maintaining just that sufficiency of rhythm to create the sense of one motion permanently maintained.

All this is a device to secure that in a work of art we contemplate the object whole and entire. In the moment of apprehension we do not analyse and we do not relate it to other things ; we merely absorb it ; we draw it into ourselves, or rather it draws us into itself. This is peculiarly marked

in relation to the two great arts which use a temporal process as their instrument—music and poetry, and especially the drama. The Greeks, who had an unerring instinct in these matters, always chose for tragedy stories which were already known to the audience. For comedy they would invent their plots; but for tragedy they would choose a plot that was already known, and all the originality that the poet displayed was shown in his handling of the characters and the way in which the sequence of a plot already familiar was brought out. Hence the great prominence in the Greek tragedies of tragic irony, that is to say, situations in which the character upon the stage uses words which have one meaning for him but another for the audience; and a great deal of the effect of his speeches depended upon the audience knowing that his words would be fulfilled in a sense other than he dreamed. We know it for ourselves. The first time we see the play *Macbeth*, if we have not read it before, it is indeed deeply moving; but it is infinitely more moving afterwards when we see it again. When, for example, Lady Macbeth says: ‘A little water clears us of this deed’, and we know that she will soon be saying: ‘All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand’, or when she says: ‘What’s done, is done’, and we know that she will soon be saying: ‘What’s done, cannot be undone.’ A great deal of the appreciation of the greatest art arises from our apprehension of the present in the light, not only of the past, but of the future also. But you see that, in aiming at that, art or poetry is making an enterprise to compass eternity. It is no longer content with an apprehension of things as they go by, but it must see them as they pass in the light both of that from which they spring and of that to which they are leading. In all the greatest art there is, I think, this forward as well as backward reference; or in other words, that attempt which art makes to fasten the mind with complete exclusiveness of other concerns upon the object before it is of necessity an attempt to liberate us from the mere passage of time and the transitoriness of things, and to tempt us for a moment into the eternal realm.

Now it goes along with all that I have said that science is indifferent to value of any kind; it is concerned with fact only. For the scientist it is of primary consequence that the real and objective world should correspond to his theory. For the scientific historian, for example, it is of primary consequence that the events should have taken place as he records them, and if evidence is found showing that in fact somebody whom he has described as having been present at a battle was elsewhere, he must alter his book. The poet or the artist is concerned with value and is indifferent to fact. It does not the least matter to the poetic excellence of the *Iliad* whether there ever was a Trojan war. If it could be proved that as a matter of fact Agamemnon never did sacrifice his daughter at the outset of that expedition, the pathos of Aeschylus's play would be just the same. The poet is concerned with value only. He takes the passing show of things and distils from it its significance; but once he has got the significance he lets the passing show go by, or will invent another altogether, which will exhibit still better the significance which he has found in life. People ask sometimes, 'Is the Bible true?'. Before you answer, you have got to find out what they mean. The Bible consists of many parts, and first you must ask about which part of the Bible they are asking; and you must also ask them what they mean by true. William the Conqueror came to England in 1066. That is true; all there is of it is true; but there is not much truth in it. It is very probable there never lived and breathed upon this island a king named Lear, possessing three daughters named Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia, of whom the youngest married the King of France. All that probably never happened; but the play *King Lear* is packed with truth. If you are going to ask, which is the more true, Shakespeare's *King Lear* or the statement drawn out of a chronological table that William the Conqueror landed in England in 1066, which will you answer? It depends which kind of truth you mean. But which is the more important kind of truth? When you have learned that fact about William the Conqueror you are neither better nor wiser; you have merely got a piece of information, which

may lead you on, if you use it properly, to become better and wiser; by itself it does nothing for you. But you cannot have entered into the intellectual and emotional processes of which the drama *King Lear* is the expression without becoming in some small degree at least better and wiser. The kind of truth that is there, because it is truth about value and not about mere fact devoid of value, is of immediate significance to every human being; whereas the sort of truth that is investigated by scientific processes is of immense value to society and of great satisfaction to those who are able to find it, but it is sufficient for us that there should be a few experts who know that truth; it is not sufficient for us that we should leave to experts the knowledge of the truth about what makes life worth living.

And because art is the expression of value or significance, sympathy is indispensable to its appreciation, and this immediately entails an element of uncertainty. Benedetto Croce, in his most interesting *Aesthetic*, excludes the whole element of sympathy because it introduces uncertainty. You cannot rely upon all people feeling sympathy in the same degree towards the same object, and for that reason some will be more appealed to by one artist and some by another; though if you give long enough time, all will agree at any rate which are great artists in any main class, which are the great musicians for instance, or the great poets, though there will still be some who prefer Bach and some who prefer Beethoven. That seems to me to be inevitable; nor is it at all calamitous, because there is no great gain in finding a universal agreement that such and such is the greatest poet, and such and such is his greatest performance, provided we can recognize which are the really great things, and come to them, each of us choosing that genius from whom we are able to obtain the most sustenance for our own minds and spirits. But it is true that sympathy is an essential ingredient in artistic apprehension. If you find yourself fundamentally out of sympathy with what is deepest in any artist's apprehension of the world and of life you will be unable thoroughly to appreciate it, and must leave that to those who find themselves

in sympathy with it. I know, for example, that I shall not in this life fully appreciate Tennyson or Milton. In the case of each of these I must say, as Coleridge said about the sunset-clouds: 'I see, not feel, how beautiful they are.' Because I am so profoundly irritated by both Milton's and Tennyson's outlook upon life, therefore I cannot get into that condition of contemplative repose which is essential; I remain in a scientific attitude towards them; I want to know why they said this, that, and the other; I want to challenge an immense quantity of their statements. The moment you are doing that, you may obtain intellectual stimulus from reading them, but you are not in the aesthetic frame of mind.

That leads us to ask the last question. What, then, is the due order in experience of these two mental activities? How may we best relate them? In principle surely it will be like this. Our first apprehension is apprehension of the object as a whole. We open our eyes upon the world and it is all presented to us at once. So it is with regard to common experience, whether it is of a real event or of a work of art. At first it makes its impact upon us, its entire self upon our entire self. Then must come the reflective intellect with its questions and its criticisms, analysing this experience and relating it to other experiences. But you get the best out of that process if you can then again return to the apprehension with all your faculties. You hear, say, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. You do not remember very much. You remember the opening phrase—no one can ever forget that; you probably remember the Adagio, or at least you remember that you liked it; and you remember the rhythm of the Scherzo, and possibly of the Finale. Then you get your analytical programme; you take the symphony to pieces, you find there are, for example, subjects that you never noticed were there. But if you stop at the scientific stage you are farther from the work of art than you were when listening the first time. You must now go back to it, hear it again as a whole, bringing all these things which critical examination of it has revealed to you.

That, I suggest, should be the order permanently in which

we relate in our own mental activity these two methods of experiencing the world. First we get its general impression ; then examine that and analyse it, finding all the detail we can ; and then go back, with our minds now sensitive to this wealth of detail, to appreciate it once more as a whole. So science and art will work in and out of one another in a perpetual swing of the pendulum, and we shall always be having a richer apprehension than before, while yet we always go back to the stage which is no longer merely inquiring or critical, but is one of apprehension and enjoyment.

And that last stage is one which, just because it claims exclusive concentration of our whole faculty upon the object and aims at liberating us from the transitoriness of things and lifting us above the flux of time, is always on the verge of passing into worship.

WM. EBOR.

PROUST ET RUSKIN

MARCEL PROUST est, je crois, parmi les écrivains français de ce siècle, celui qui a le plus rapidement conquis une gloire étendue en Angleterre et en Amérique. Cette conquête s'explique pour une large part par la nouveauté de l'apport de Proust. Elle aurait pourtant été moins facile si Proust n'avait possédé certaines habitudes de style et d'esprit, qu'il devait à son intimité avec quelques grands écrivains anglais et qui faisaient de lui, pour le lecteur anglosaxon, un monstre moins surprenant. Un critique français a été jusqu'à écrire que Proust est le plus grand des romanciers anglais ; la phrase me paraît être un paradoxe brillant plus qu'une vérité profonde, car, par d'autres côtés, Proust se rattache clairement à des modèles français comme Saint-Simon et même, bien que de façon plus cachée, comme Flaubert et Balzac. Ce qui est vrai, c'est que, parmi les maîtres dont il avait étudié si minutieusement la manière d'écrire, de construire un livre, ou de concevoir un personnage, plusieurs étaient anglais. 'C'est curieux, écrit-il, que dans tous les genres les plus différents, de George Eliot à Hardy, de Stevenson à Emerson, il n'y a pas de littérature qui ait sur moi un pouvoir comparable à la littérature anglaise et américaine.'

Mais de toutes les amitiés intellectuelles de Proust, la plus intime et la plus étroite a sans doute été celle qui l'unit à Ruskin, car il a traduit deux des livres de Ruskin, la *Bible d'Amiens* et *Sésame et les lys*, chargeant ses traductions de notes et les faisant précéder de préfaces qui sont assez peu connues, surtout celle de la *Bible d'Amiens*, et pourtant extrêmement importantes parce qu'elles contiennent déjà toute la doctrine esthétique de Proust. Je voudrais essayer de montrer ici pourquoi l'affinité entre Proust et Ruskin était naturelle et combien une connaissance exacte du style de Ruskin a contribué à faire de Proust l'écrivain merveilleusement original qu'il a été.

Proust lui-même a montré que le secret d'une originalité

créatrice ne peut être analysé qu'en recueillant avec soin et en comparant les traits singuliers propres à un auteur : ' Si le critique n'a pas su démêler ces traits singuliers et essentiels, il pourra écrire tous les livres du monde sur Ruskin, l'homme, l'écrivain, le prophète, l'artiste, toutes ses constructions s'élèveront peut-être très haut, mais à côté de son sujet. Elles pourront porter aux nues la situation littéraire du critique mais ne vaudront pas, pour l'intelligence de l'œuvre, la précision exacte d'une nuance juste, si légère semble-t-elle.'

Dans le cas de Ruskin et de Proust, plusieurs de ces traits singuliers sont propres à la fois aux deux écrivains. Dès qu'en France des hommes comme Robert de la Sizeranne et Jacques Bardoux firent connaître Ruskin, cette œuvre devait attirer l'attention et la sympathie de Marcel Proust adolescent. Les deux hommes étaient nés de familles de grands bourgeois cultivés. Tous deux avaient eu une enfance en quelque sorte 'couverte' et avaient passé leurs journées dans des jardins, à observer avec une curiosité minutieuse les oiseaux, les fleurs et les nuages. Tous deux vécurent des existences d'amateurs riches, existence qui a peut-être ses dangers parce qu'elle prive l'enfant ou le jeune homme du contact avec une grande part de la vie réelle, mais qui, en lui laissant un épiderme plus sensible et en lui assurant une possibilité de méditation prolongée, lui permet d'arriver à une délicatesse de nuances très particulière et très rare. Tous deux enfin, comme Flaubert, ont mêlé les préoccupations morales aux préoccupations esthétiques et ont été des 'saints' de la littérature.

Que Proust trouvait-il de nouveau dans Ruskin ? D'abord la connaissance et le goût des arts plastiques. Plusieurs des amis peintres de Proust (et en particulier Jacques-Émile Blanche) nous ont montré que ce goût n'était pas, chez lui, naturel. Ruskin, en lui apportant une image littéraire de l'œuvre d'art, formait en quelque sorte le pont entre l'intelligence de Proust et certains aspects du réel. Dès qu'on lit Proust, on retrouve Ruskin. Si Proust compare un personnage à la *Charité* de Giotto, c'est que Ruskin parle souvent de cette figure. C'est les livres de Ruskin à la main que

Proust est allé voir la cathédrale d'Amiens, celle d'Abbeville, celle de Rouen. Au début il y cherchait moins leur beauté propre que leur beauté telle que l'avait aimée l'écrivain qu'il admirait. Il allait en pèlerinage à la cathédrale de Rouen pour y poursuivre, dans le Portail des Libraires, une petite figure qu'avait décrite Ruskin et, après de longues recherches, il la découvrait. A Amiens, Proust voulut suivre les prescriptions ruskiniennes et trouva sur la gauche de l'église, à la place même qu'indique Ruskin, les mendiants dont parle celui-ci, si vieux d'ailleurs que c'étaient peut-être les mêmes : 'J'allai avant tout leur faire l'aumône, avec l'illusion, où il entraît du fétichisme, d'accomplir un acte élevé de piété envers Ruskin.' Ruskin fut pour lui l'esprit qui éveilla ces pierres mortes.

Il sentait, en lisant les livres de Ruskin, que par le charme de cette pensée 'l'univers s'enrichirait de tout ce que j'ignorais jusque-là, des cathédrales gothiques et de combien de tableaux d'Angleterre et d'Italie qui n'avaient pas encore éveillé en moi ce désir sans lequel il n'y a jamais de véritable connaissance'. Il partit pour Venise, pour toucher et pour voir incarner 'en des palais défaillants mais encore debout et roses', les idées de Ruskin sur l'architecture. A ceux qui lui disaient : 'Les belles choses méritent d'être vues en elles-mêmes et non point parce que tel grand critique en a bien parlé ou en a fait le support de ses théories', il eût probablement répondu : 'Aucune chose n'est vue en elle-même. Nous ne pouvons jamais voir les objets qu'à travers nos états d'âme. Tel paysage paraît admirable, tel morceau de musique émouvant, à un homme amoureux parce que le hasard les a associés à sa première rencontre avec telle femme. De même tel tableau, tel palais, devient soudain d'un grand prix pour le voyageur qui vient y retrouver les impressions d'un maître parce que ceux qui ont accepté une discipline spirituelle sentent que leur puissance de comprendre et de sentir en est infiniment accrue.' Proust, lecteur de Ruskin, se trouve 'en état de grâce' par rapport aux œuvres d'art, alors qu'il ne l'était pas avant la communion ruskinienne. Si l'on pense maintenant au rôle si grand que jouent les

œuvres d'art dans les comparaisons, dans les descriptions de Proust, on verra combien la *Recherche du temps perdu* eût été un livre différent si Ruskin n'avait révélé à Proust le mystère de la beauté plastique.

Ce qui est vrai des œuvres d'art, l'est aussi de la nature. Une des idées favorites de Proust est l'impossibilité où nous sommes de connaître la nature autrement qu'à travers les grands artistes. Plusieurs fois, dans *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, il nous montre, à propos du peintre Elstir, comment il cherchait à retrouver dans la réalité ce qui l'exaltait si fort dans les tableaux. Ruskin a été pour lui un des esprits intercesseurs qui nous sont nécessaires, au début de notre vie, pour prendre contact avec le réel. Ruskin lui a appris à regarder des vagues, des fleurs, à les regarder de tout près, comme les dessinent certains artistes japonais ou comme sont peints dans les dessins de Dürer, à l'Albertina de Vienne, des feuilles, ou des animaux, ou des fleurs. Un même goût inné pour les nuances, une semblable manière de savourer les couleurs et les formes, étaient communs aux deux hommes. Chez Proust, comme le montre si bien Curtius, on retrouve 'ce goût français qui repose sur une faculté de sentir différenciée à l'extrême et dont le type idéal est le Connaisseur. L'art d'un Proust n'est tout à fait compréhensible que de ce point de vue. Cet art est une analyse des impondérables, une spécialisation de la sensibilité poussée à l'extrême. Il décrit les nuances du réel avec une précision inégalée. Et cela dans tous les domaines. Quand Bergotte dit : 'Si, j'aime tout de même mieux le Chateaubriand d'*Atala* que celui de *René*, il me semble que c'est plus doux,' il décèle le même raffinement de goût que montre le Baron de Charlus quand il commande des poires dans un restaurant.' J'ajouterai : il décèle le même raffinement de goût que montre Ruskin, parlant des vins que boiront les citoyens de son Utopie et édictant qu'on n'en pourra distribuer aucun qui n'ait au moins dix ans de date.

Autre point commun : tous deux font à la science une part très grande dans la composition de l'œuvre d'art, Ruskin disant que chaque classe de rochers, chaque variété de sol,

chaque espèce de nuages doit être étudiée et rendue avec une exactitude géologique et météorologique, Proust s'attachant à décrire des sentiments avec une précision de médecin.

Chez tous deux même idée morale de l'art. Ruskin éprouvait le besoin de sacrifier tous ses devoirs, tous ses plaisirs et jusqu'à sa propre vie, à ce qui était pour lui la seule manière possible d'entrer en contact avec la réalité. Proust, lui aussi, considère que presque le seul devoir pour un artiste, c'est ce contact avec une réalité qui est sienne : ' Cette Beauté, dit-il de Ruskin, à laquelle il se trouva ainsi consacrer sa vie, ne fut pas conçue par lui comme un objet de jouissance fait pour la charmer, mais comme une réalité infiniment plus importante que la vie, pour laquelle il aurait donné la sienne. De là vous allez voir découler toute l'esthétique de Ruskin.' Mais de là aussi vous pourriez voir découler l'esthétique et l'éthique de Proust lui-même. Le dernier volume de son œuvre, le *Temps retrouvé*, est tout entier consacré à montrer que la recreation du monde par la mémoire et par l'art est infiniment plus importante que la vie et qu'en fait la vie sans l'art n'est que du temps perdu, ' et que rien ne peut être jamais vraiment possédé que sous l'aspect de l'éternité qui est aussi l'aspect de l'art '.

Mais c'est surtout en ce qui concerne le style que l'influence de Ruskin sur Proust me paraît si grande que je suis surpris de constater que les critiques ne l'ont pas, jusqu'à ce jour, analysée. Comme la vision de Proust, la vision de Ruskin est une vision au ralenti, presque microscopique. Prenez par exemple une phrase comme celle où Ruskin décrit des vagues : ' Their hollow surface is marked by parallel lines, like those of a smooth mill-weir, and graduated by reflected and transmitted lights of the most wonderful intricacy, its curve being at the same time necessarily of mathematical purity and precision; yet at the top of this curve, when it nods over, there is a sudden laxity and giving way, the water swings and jumps along the ridge like a shaken chain, and the motion runs from part to part as it does through a serpent's body.' La phrase, bien traduite, pourrait être de Proust. Rapprochez-la de la description du jet d'eau par celui-ci qui

est au début de la deuxième partie de *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, vous y trouverez la même précision mathématique et pourtant gracieuse.

L'emploi de l'adjectif est le même chez les deux hommes. Tous deux cherchent, par une suite continue de plusieurs adjectifs, à serrer de plus en plus la description de l'objet. Exemple, chez Proust : 'le jet d'eau svelte, immobile, durci'. Chez Ruskin : 'the thick, creamy, curdling, overlapping, massy foam, which remains for a moment only after the fall of the wave, and is seen in perfection in its running up the beach'. C'est certainement encore de Ruskin que Proust a pris le goût de ses belles images de pierres précieuses. Comparez chez Ruskin décrivant un cerisier, 'clustered pearl and pendant ruby' et, chez Proust : 'Les Guermantes restaient reconnaissables, faciles à discerner et à suivre, comme les filons dont la blondeur veine le jaspé et l'onix.' Et quand je trouve, au commencement des *Praeterita* de Ruskin, un admirable passage sur les fleurs d'amandier et sur l'importance que ces amandiers et les pèlerinages faits pour les revoir ont eus dans la vie de Ruskin, je ne puis m'empêcher de penser aux buissons d'aubépines de Marcel Proust.

Le thème des aubépines est probablement venu de Ruskin, et même, je pense, l'idée générale de la nécessité des thèmes dans l'œuvre d'art, si puissante chez Proust. Dans une note de *Sésame et les lys*, il dit : 'Mais c'est le charme précisément de l'œuvre de Ruskin qu'il y ait entre les idées d'un même livre, et entre les divers livres, des liens qu'il ne montre pas, qu'il laisse à peine apparaître un instant et qu'il a d'ailleurs peut-être tissés après coup, mais jamais artificiels cependant puisqu'ils sont toujours tirés de la substance toujours identique à elle-même de sa pensée. Les préoccupations multiples mais constantes de cette pensée, voilà ce qui assure à ces livres une unité plus réelle que l'unité de composition, généralement absente, il faut bien le dire.' Ne dirait-on pas que, dans ces phrases où il analyse le charme de l'œuvre de Ruskin, phrases écrites en un temps où son grand roman était encore à peine un projet ou une esquisse, il indique déjà ce que vont être ses propres procédés de composition ?

Mais je crois que l'on peut dire que, si Proust a pris de Ruskin l'idée de la vision au ralenti, il l'a portée beaucoup plus loin que son maître. Les notes que Proust a mises au bas des pages de *Sésame et les lys* sont très frappantes à ce point de vue. Toujours son analyse creuse plus profondément que celle de Ruskin. Quand il essaie d'analyser l'état d'âme original du lecteur, il est beaucoup plus préoccupé de la vérité rigoureuse de ses observations que ne l'est Ruskin, soucieux surtout de donner un enseignement moral. 'Soyez sûr, dit Ruskin, que si un auteur a une valeur quelconque, vous n'arriverez pas d'un seul coup à sa pensée; bien plus, qu'à sa pensée entière, vous n'arriverez d'aucune façon avant bien longtemps. Non qu'il ne dise ce qu'il veut dire, et aussi qu'il ne le dise fortement; mais cette pensée, il ne peut pas la dire tout entière et, ce qui est plus étrange, il ne le *veut* pas, mais d'une manière cachée et par paraboles, de façon qu'il puisse savoir que vous avez besoin d'elle.'

Proust répond par une analyse bien plus délicate: 'Mais cette sorte de brume qui enveloppe la splendeur des beaux livres comme celle des belles matinées est une brume naturelle, l'haleine en quelque sorte du génie, qu'il exhale sans le savoir et non un voile artificiel dont il entourerait volontairement son œuvre pour la cacher au vulgaire. Quand Ruskin dit: "Il veut savoir si vous en êtes digne", c'est une simple figure. Car donner à sa pensée une forme brillante, plus accessible et plus séduisante pour le public, la diminue, et fait l'écrivain facile, l'écrivain de second ordre. Mais envelopper sa pensée pour ne la laisser saisir que de ceux qui prendraient la peine de lever le voile, fait l'écrivain difficile qui est aussi un écrivain de second ordre.'

En somme Proust, ayant appris de Ruskin une manière nouvelle de regarder à la fois les œuvres d'art et la nature, a développé cette manière et l'a enfin poussée plus loin que son maître. Non seulement ses descriptions sont plus belles encore et plus précises que celles de Ruskin, mais surtout il a appliqué aux sentiments la vision minutieuse de Ruskin, ce que Ruskin n'avait pas fait. Il l'a même appliquée aux sentiments moraux, ce que Ruskin n'eût pas osé faire. Il n'en

reste pas moins que, sans la lecture de Ruskin et sans le grand amour qu'il eut pour cette œuvre, Proust ne se fût peut-être jamais aussi complètement découvert. Ainsi Byron n'eût pas été lui-même sans Goethe, Corneille sans les Espagnols, Alfred de Musset sans Byron. L'innombrable postérité de Proust qui, en ce moment, se multiplie en France est aussi, sans le savoir, une postérité de Ruskin que dans la plupart des cas elle ignore. Car un seul exemplaire d'un livre, transporté par le hasard et tombé dans un esprit qui est pour cette particulière façon de sentir un terrain favorable, suffit pour importer dans un pays toute une espèce littéraire nouvelle, comme une seule graine transportée par le vent d'île en île suffit pour implanter sur une terre une plante qui jusqu'alors lui avait manqué et qui soudain s'y développe et la couvre.

ANDRÉ MAUROIS.

BOSWELL'S ARCHIVES

A GOOD deal has already been written, and very well written,¹ of the romantic discovery of the forgotten hoard which for more than a century lay, unseen and unsuspected, in 'my archives at Auchinleck', and of the fabulous wealth now being unfolded by the publication of the papers. But the accounts that have been given are difficult of access, being either in scarce and costly books or in periodicals. No final estimate can yet be attempted, for the publication of the papers is still far from completion; but a preliminary survey may be of interest, though in part it must tread familiar ground.

For to make the matter clear it is necessary to go back to the provisions of Boswell's will,² and to the familiar story of how they were carried out. He made a will in 1785, appointing as his executors 'my much valued spouse Mrs. Margaret Montgomerie' (who however predeceased her husband) 'and my worthy friend Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, Baronet'. He disposed as an heirloom 'the Ebony Cabinet and the

¹ Particularly by the late Geoffrey Scott in the Introduction to the first volume of *Private Papers of James Boswell from Malahide Castle in the Collection of Lt.-Col. Ralph Heyward Isham* (a limited and very costly edition, probably in eighteen volumes of varying sizes, of which twelve have appeared; the number of copies available for consultation in this country is very small, though Col. Isham has most generously presented sets to some of the great libraries); and by Professor F. A. Pottle of Yale (who succeeded to the editorship on Scott's lamented death in 1929) in the Preface to *The Private Papers . . . a Catalogue*, by F. A. and M. S. Pottle (1931; a separate and, for its value, an inexpensive publication; but only 415 copies were printed, and the small supply available in this country was immediately absorbed). There have been also articles in newspapers; I may be allowed to refer to my own, *The Making of Boswell's Johnson*, in *Times Literary Supplement*, 6 Feb. 1930; though that article is in some parts now obsolete, and is not free from error.

² Boswell's will was first printed by Charles Rogers in the book called *Boswelliana*, printed for the Grampian Club in 1874, which contains the first substantial memoir of Boswell.

‘dressing plate of silver gilt’ which had belonged to his great-grandmother Veronica Countess of Kincardine, and forbade his heirs to ‘alienate or impignorate the same on any account whatever’. We shall meet the Ebony Cabinet again. But for our purpose the most important provision is the following :

I hereby leave to the said Sir William Forbes, the Reverend Mr. Temple and Edmund Malone Esquire all my manuscripts of my own composition, and all my letters from various persons to be published for the benefit of my younger children, as they shall decide, that is to say they are to have a discretionary power to publish more or less.

Rogers’s account of the sequel is this :

The three persons nominated as literary executors did not meet, and the entire business of the trust was administered by Sir William Forbes, Bart., who appointed as his law agent Robert Boswell, writer to the signet, cousin german of the deceased. By that gentleman’s advice, Boswell’s manuscripts were left to the disposal of his family; and it is believed that the whole were immediately destroyed.¹ The *Commonplace Book*² escaped, having been incidentally sold among the printed books.

Rogers gives no authority for this statement. But in his preface he thanks ‘the representatives of Thomas David Boswell, the biographer’s brother, and of his uncle, Dr. John Boswell’, who had been ‘most polite and obliging in their communications’. It may be presumed that he relied on a family tradition.³ Whether the tradition was due to mere

¹ In my *Times Literary Supplement* article I stated that ‘there is somewhere extant a letter from Malone to (we think) Euphemia Boswell, assuring her that some papers of her father’s had not, as she feared, perished by fire, but were safe in London’. I wrote from memory; and I ought now to confess that I cannot find the letter, nor any note of it. I am loath to believe that I dreamed it; but confusion with the letter of 4 May 1809 (printed *infra*) is not impossible.

² i.e. *Boswelliana*.

³ Rogers had some knowledge of Robert Boswell, W.S. (son of Dr. John Boswell), who was born at Auchinleck in the same year as his cousin, 1740. ‘Possessed of literary tastes and unflagging industry, he qualified himself to read the Scriptures in the original tongues. . . . His

confusion and error, or had been deliberately falsified, perhaps will never be known. But we are now in possession of documentary evidence which shows it to be strangely remote from fact.

But before we pursue the truth, it will be convenient to explore the legend a little further. Many years before Rogers gave it its final form, its growth had been fostered by various circumstances. In 1829 the indefatigable Croker sought to draw on the archives for his great edition of the *Life of Johnson*, and applied to Sir Walter Scott. But Sir Walter was already convinced that there was nothing to be found (he had learned the legend in Edinburgh), and Dr. Pottle tells us that he and young Sir James Boswell 'missed each other in mutual calls'. Many years later, Dr. Birkbeck Hill tried to penetrate the barriers. His reception was remarkable. His edition of the *Life* appeared in 1887. In 1889 he received this letter:

44 Queen Street
Edinburgh
June 1, 1889

Dear Sir,

I am told you are about to publish another addition of My Grandfather's book—'Boswell's, *Life of Johnston*', and that you have 'some papers from Ayrshire'! May I ask you to be so good as inform me from whom you received them and oblige

Yours faithfully

M. E. Vassall

I may tell you that I am daughter of Sir Alexander Boswell.
G. Berbick Hill.¹

metrical epitaph on his cousin . . . has been quoted. Eminently pious, he exhorted publicly' (*Boswelliana*, p. 198). Not enough attention, perhaps, has been paid to Robert Boswell and his possible importance as a myth-maker. A man of this way of thinking might well advise the destruction of his cousin's journals, and might perhaps assume that his advice had been taken. The metrical epitaph which he (unsuccessfully) offered to the family contains a similar admonition:

'Bury his failings in the silent grave.'

(*Boswelliana*, p. 188.)

¹ G. B. H. printed this letter in *Johnson Club Papers*, 1899, p. 55—respecting its orthography.

This superb outburst did not arise from the writer's own knowledge or the use of her own judgement; it had its roots in an inveterate tradition. But it gains in dramatic significance if we suppose that the writer, when she sharpened her pen for an unwonted exercise, was well aware that the documents, for which impertinent scholars were groping, lay safely locked in the Ebony Cabinet. To understand the tradition it is desirable to trace the family history. Boswell left two sons and three daughters. The elder son, Alexander, bore his grandfather's name. He was an antiquary and a Tory politician, whose public services were in 1821 rewarded by a baronetcy which he did not long enjoy; for in 1822 he was killed in a political duel. It will be seen that he was not consulted about the proposed publication, from any share in which the terms of the will excluded him; and this was construed by Geoffrey Scott as a reflection on his fitness in such a matter. In support of this view he quoted a letter from Sir Walter to Croker:

The late Sir Alexander Boswell was a proud man, and, like his grandfather, thought his father lowered himself by his deferential suit and service to Johnson. I have observed he disliked any allusion to the book or to Johnson himself, and I have heard that Johnson's fine picture by Sir Joshua was sent upstairs out of the sitting apartments at Auchinleck.

But this is hardly to the point. When Boswell made his will in 1785 Alexander was ten years old. If he reviewed his dispositions ten years later, his Johnsonian collections had already been given to the world. It is likely enough that Sir Alexander, like his grandfather, was no Johnsonian; there, Sir Walter can hardly be wrong. But it does not follow that he was disloyal to his father's memory, or out of sympathy with his talents. As Dr. Pottle points out, his claim to be reckoned a good Boswellian is made out by his printing *Lines to an Irish Air* (which celebrate Boswell's intimacy with the notorious Mrs. Rudd) and *Songs in the Justiciary Opera*. But his younger brother James (born 1778), Fellow of Brasenose College and Commissioner of Bankruptcy, was probably a better Boswellian, and was also a Johnsonian.

He lived a scholarly and convivial life in London, and was the intimate of Edmund Malone, with whom he was associated both in Johnsonian and in Shakespearian editorship. It was natural that the literary executors should consult him—as we shall see they did—before making their decision; for he was the only competent representative of the ‘younger children’ who were to benefit by any publication, and the task was congenial to his tastes.

James died in 1822. Of the three daughters, Veronica died a few months after her father. Elizabeth married her cousin, William Boswell; but we do not know that she was literary. Euphemia, who did not marry, inherited her father’s tastes, but was also ‘the victim of a diseased imagination’. That she, like her brother James, was a Johnsonian may be inferred from the desire expressed in her will (but not complied with) that she should be buried in Westminster Abbey, near Johnson’s grave.

Alexander’s heir, Sir James, second and last baronet (died 1857), is described as a sportsman. Having no male issue he succeeded in breaking the entail (the material word *irredeemably* being in erasure), and his property passed to his two daughters. The elder, Julia, became Mrs. Mounsey, and lived at Auchinleck. The younger, Emily, married the fifth Lord Talbot de Malahide, an Irish peer. On Mrs. Mounsey’s death in 1905 her property passed to the sixth Lord Talbot de Malahide. The Ebony Cabinet, and other receptacles, crossed the Irish Channel.

We may now return to 1795. Of Boswell’s three literary executors, Edmund Malone (1741–1812), William Johnston Temple (1739–96), and Sir William Forbes (1739–1806), the first two need no introduction. Sir William Forbes, baronet, of Pitsligo, banker, member of the Club, and biographer of Beattie, is likewise well known to readers of Boswell’s letters and the *Life of Johnson*.

That the three executors ‘did not meet’ is true. Fortunately ample evidence has survived of their diligent collaboration. The documents in the case are letters from Forbes to Malone of 14 August 1795 and 30 June 1796, an entry in Temple’s

diary for 19 July 1796, and a letter from Malone to Euphemia Boswell of 4 May 1809. The first letter (from Col. Isham's collection), as quoted by Scott and Pottle, is as follows:

Mr. Boswell has left with me a large parcel of his Father's letters and papers, being a part of that Collection with the charge of examining which Our late Worthy friend by his will has honoured Mr. Temple and you and me; a task, this, it must be owned, of very considerable delicacy. Yet I think we may lay down to ourselves certain Canons or principles by which to judge whether any, or what part, of the papers may be proper for publication. And for my own part, I shall feel the difficulty of the work very considerably removed by having the benefit of such able assistance as yours, of whose judgement I entertain the very highest Opinion.

I am busily employed in perusing the whole, which, as soon as I have gone thro' them, I shall pack up in a Box and forward to you by the waggon; and in the same manner, when you have perused those letters and papers that are in the house in London, I shall be much obliged to you to take the trouble of forwarding them to me by the same mode of conveyance. They shall be afterwards carefully returned to you. . . .

'Mr. Boswell' is Alexander, who had brought these papers from Auchinleck to (I suppose) Edinburgh.

The second letter from Forbes to Malone is of even greater interest. It has been quoted by Scott and Pottle, but the full text is, I believe, only to be found in Mr. R. B. Adam's Catalogue¹ of his collection. I give as much of the text as has any reference to any Boswell. The letter is dated Edinburgh, 30 June 1796.

You have been pleased to take the trouble of making a long apology for not writing sooner, when engaged in one of the most laborious investigations² I ever looked on; and here have I, with no such excuse to plead, allowed day after day and week after week to slip away without expressing my thankfulness to you for your most obliging letter. But 'Procrastination is the thief of time', as Dr. Young very aptly expresses it; and I fear

¹ Oxford University Press, 1929, iii. 98.

² Not, of course, of Boswell's papers, but of Ireland's Shakespearian forgeries.

I have nothing else but your goodness to trust to for my forgiveness. I with great truth say, however, that your letter was in a very high degree satisfying to me.

I much approve of your idea of our doing nothing in regard to the publication of any of our late much regarded friend's papers at present; but rather to wait till his second son be of an age fit for selecting such of them as may be proper for the public eye. Of those which were brought to me from Auchinleck House, I have read a considerable part; but find them to consist almost entirely of letters from his private friends, by no means fit for the press, but highly valuable and interesting to his family; as they contain the most striking memorials of the high degree of estimation in which he was held by as numerous and respectable a circle of acquaintance, as almost any private gentleman, I believe, could boast of. Besides these, there is one and but one journal of a circuit. After I have gone through the whole, I will carefully send them to you in order that the papers may be altogether. His journals are, indeed, exceedingly curious, for it was a faculty he possessed and had cultivated far beyond any man I ever knew. He used occasionally, during our uninterrupted intercourse, while he resided in Edinburgh, to favor me with a perusal of these; and they ever afforded me a rich entertainment. I therefore look forward with great expectation to my having the opportunity of seeing those now in your possession. Although I have no immediate, I may rather say, scarcely remote view of being in London, I cannot urge you to send them to me, if you are impressed with any idea that they would be exposed to danger by the way; although I do not myself entertain the smallest doubt of their arriving here very safely, if packed in a box and sent by the wagon. Your mode of disposing of the 2 guineas by presenting them to Mr. James, I perfectly approve of. Your unremitting kindness and attention to him,¹ of which he makes the warmest mention, claims and has the best thanks of all his friends and connections. I have just received a letter from his brother, telling me of his safe arrival from the continent. He had once resolved to spend the summer and autumn in Switzerland and next winter in Italy; nor do I know what has induced him so suddenly to alter his plan, which I wish he had rather adhered

¹ James was then at Westminster. He matriculated at Brasenose 14 Jan. 1797.

to, as he might have much improved himself with another twelve months abroad, and he is yet rather too young to begin housekeeping at Auchinleck, notwithstanding that I have the very best opinion of his steadiness.

Sir William passes to Malone's Shakespearian studies and other matters, but returns to Alexander :

When young Mr. Boswell was consulted as to what part of the pictures he wished to have reserved for himself, his regard to economy made him only select his father's portrait by Sir Joshua, but I could not think of his depriving himself of Dr. Johnson's, which never ought to go out of his family.

He concludes with an invitation to Malone to visit him in Scotland, where he could promise congenial society and 'some Alpine scenes of no inconsiderable magnificence'.

A few weeks later, and only a few weeks before his death, Temple noted in his diary for 19 July 1796 :

Rec^d a long letter from Sir W^m Forbes respecting my dear Boswell's Letters and Papers.

He makes no comment, and we may assume that Forbes's letter contained no call to early action, the necessity or the impossibility of which might have prompted Temple to vacillation or complaint.¹

The curtain now falls. But the evidence of the documents of 1795 and 1796 is conveniently resumed for us in Malone's letter to Euphemia Boswell of 4 May 1809 preserved in the Morgan Library and first printed by Dr. Pottle.²

Foley Place

May 4, 1809

Dear Madam,

To your first letter there was no date of time, nor any denotation of place ; so that an answer could not easily be given. However, I should have answered such parts of it as I could read before now, but for some unexpected avocations ;—having learned

¹ In my article in *Times Literary Supplement* I carelessly stated that Temple's diaries contained no reference to the matter. Their editor, Mr. Bettany, corrected the mistake by a letter to the *Times Literary Supplement*.

² *Catalogue*, 1931, p. xv.

your address from your brother. You are, I conceive, under some mistake with respect to your father's papers. I was not his Executor, but to the best of my recollection he desired, in his will, that no use should be made of them without the consent of Sir Wm. Forbes and myself. They were put into my hands by Sir William, and after an inspection I was clearly of opinion that they contained nothing fit for the press. I afterwards returned them to Sir William Forbes; and since his death a large parcel of them was sent from Scotland to London for the inspection and consideration of your brother James; who, after examining them, clearly co-incided with me respecting the impropriety of printing any part of them. They are now deposited at Auchinleck; in which repository, I trust, they will be suffered to remain in peace.

I am, Madam

Your most humble and obedient Servant,
Edmond Malone.

We may now summarize the evidence. Boswell died in May 1795. In or before June 1795 Alexander 'left with' Forbes (no doubt in Edinburgh) 'a large parcel' from Auchinleck. The collection consisted 'almost entirely' of letters to Boswell, with 'one and but one journal of a circuit'. Most of Boswell's own papers, therefore, were in his London house at the time of his death. It was natural that this should be so; for the *Life of Johnson* was compiled in London, and almost all Boswell's journals were drawn on for its compilation. In June 1795 Forbes was 'busily employed in perusing the whole'; but a year later he had read only 'a considerable part'. He proposed, when he had finished reading, to send the Auchinleck papers to Malone 'in order that the papers may be altogether'. Meanwhile, Malone had taken charge of the London papers and (by June 1796) had made up his mind that the decision should be postponed till James could take a hand. This view was welcomed by Forbes and (doubtless) communicated to Temple. Forbes further proposed (both in June 1795 and June 1796) that the London papers should be sent to him, for perusal and return. Malone, writing from memory thirteen years later, is not perfectly explicit. The papers 'were put into my hands by

Sir William', and 'I afterwards returned them to Sir William'. Does this mean that Forbes sent the Auchinleck papers to London, or that he as executor authorized Malone to remove the London papers, or both? What Malone 'returned' doubtless means the London papers as well as the Auchinleck papers (if the latter were ever in his hands). Finally, after Forbes's death, 'a large parcel of them was sent . . . to London for the inspection . . . of . . . James'.

What sort of publication had Boswell in mind in 1785? I do not know that the question has been asked, but it may be important. When he signed his will, in May 1785, the only use he had made of his journals was to publish his Corsican Tour. But he was already engaged on the publication of the *Tour to the Hebrides* (it appeared in the same year), and looking forward to the publication of the *Life*. Since he made his will under the apprehension 'of some danger to my life, which however may prove a false alarm',¹ he was not secure of the publication by himself of either of his Johnsonian books. We must remember then, in reading the will, that when Boswell contemplated the publication of 'manuscripts of his own composition' he may not have thought solely, or even primarily, if indeed at all, of the manuscripts which remained unpublished at his death. He may well have been thinking both of manuscripts which he later published and of manuscripts which, at forty-five, he still hoped to compose.² It might even be argued that when Boswell wrote the words 'manuscripts of my own composition', he was not thinking of his journals at all. Since, however, his journals included the bulk of his Johnsonian material, he probably was thinking of them, though not of them only; but it by no means follows that he had any idea of publishing his journals in general.

Similarly, his 'letters from various persons' included his letters from Johnson. They included also letters from other eminent men whose lives he had thought of writing; and doubtless he looked forward to receiving many more. We

¹ The apprehended duel was not fought.

² See the list, in Pottle's *Bibliography*, of his projected works.

are not bound to suppose that he contemplated the publication of letters in isolation, or of a miscellaneous collection of letters.

But whatever Boswell's intention might be, his executors' action can never have been much in doubt. Such hesitation as they express may be no more than was felt as due to their friend's memory and his children's feelings. That they took as long as they did to reach—or not to reach—a decision, is readily understood. The mere physical fatigue of arranging and reading this mass of papers might well induce procrastination in busy men. And they knew their friend well enough to be sure that his journals, though 'exceedingly curious' and entertaining, must contain many painful passages. A few episodes they may perhaps have considered as possible materials for a book; but neither they, nor any friend of Boswell's, can have thought of his journals in general as in any sense fit for publication. If they read widely in them—and curiosity could scarcely refrain—one can only wonder that they did not think of destruction as a pious duty, at least a pious fraud.

Here I must conclude these speculations, which are confessedly tentative. They are not even grounded on any exhaustive study of the twelve volumes of the *Private Papers*. These contain indications of Boswell's attitude to his journals; but any inferences might be upset by passages in the later journals not yet made public. It is possible, again, that the journals after 1785 may affect our reading of the will.

I refrain, reluctantly, from any attempt to estimate the quality and value of the *Papers* as a whole. *Respicere Finem*.

R. W. CHAPMAN.

MUSIC AND LETTERS

ONCE upon a time the world of letters included Music among its departments. The education of the average Englishman in the Elizabethan days would not have been thought complete if he had not been taught something concerning the art, or at least something in the way of what we now call appreciation. The often-quoted passage in Morley's *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597), telling how a guest was put to confusion when the part-books were brought out and he was expected to join in madrigal-singing, may have been a little too highly coloured to be accepted as a literal statement of fact, since the treatise naturally gives an awful warning against ignorance of what it undertakes to teach. But Shakespeare's many references to music may surely be taken to imply a certain amount of musical knowledge in the audience, for if the technicalities which Bianca had to learn had been quite unintelligible to the bulk of the spectators, would they have endured their length and minuteness? At any rate, the sixteenth-century hearer who was conscious that he had 'no music in himself' would not like to find that he was unworthy of confidence, and would probably keep quiet about his disability. He would not take pride in 'not knowing one tune from another', as many an otherwise educated man has been known to boast in fairly recent times.

Throughout the seventeenth as through the sixteenth century, music was recognized, if not actively practised, by educated people in general. Down to the Restoration, as we are apt to forget, musical performances took place almost exclusively in private houses or in church. 1665 is the earliest date that has been found for a public concert in England (a subscription concert at Oxford), and this date is considerably earlier than any notice of public concerts on the continent. No doubt it often happened that musicians were paid for their services on special occasions; and it is likely

that among the nobility there were some who emulated the 'King's Band of Musick' and employed musicians of their own, thus befriending the art in a way that resembled the beneficent patronage exerted at so many small courts abroad, the influence of which was powerful on the development of the art in the classical days. But the bulk of the music that was to be heard must have been of the domestic kind, and its executants what we should now call amateurs.

Somewhere about the end of the seventeenth century Milton's sphere-born sisters ceased to be harmonious; we can only guess at the severance between their divine sounds; but the wedding celebrated in the poet's immortal words had to wait for its final consummation until the breach had been healed, and Parry's music could glorify the union.

Even after this splendid epithalamium, the arts of Music and Poetry were often treated as if they were in opposition; as late as 1912, W. H. Hudson, in *A Hind in Richmond Park*, closed a beautiful comparison between the two, with these words: 'As they grew to womanhood they changed, and progressing from beauty to beauty, they grew less and less alike until, their sisterhood forgotten, they were become strangers to one another and drew further and further apart; and finally, each on her own throne, crowned a queen and goddess, and worshipped by innumerable devoted subjects, they dwell in widely-separated kingdoms.'

It is tempting to lay the blame for the separation between music and literature upon the fashionable adoration of foreign performers of whom such a torrent swept over the country not long after the Hanoverian Succession. This suggestion is perhaps less paradoxical than appears at first; we all know how common it is for games and sports to become professionalized and to lose their charm for those who were fond of them in a quiet way, and who, finding themselves so easily surpassed by the professors, lost their interest as actual participants and took to watching players who were paid for their exertions. What happened soon after the advent of Italian Opera followed exactly this course; music left the home for the theatre and concert-room, and from

about this time musical references become rarer and rarer in the general literature of the day, being almost entirely confined to easy sneers at the operatic conventions and makeshifts. The rivalries between Cuzzoni and Faustina, the combat of Nicolini with the property lion, cannot have excited much interest among those who did not frequent the Opera; and the two papers in *The Tatler* (nos. 153, 157) in which Addison likens various types of people to various musical instruments do not show much more than that the general characteristics of the mediums of sound were recognized. When Fielding's *Amelia* goes 'to the oratorio' (name not specified) she has to wait two hours before catching sight of 'Mr. Handel's back', a passage which incidentally helps us to realize some of the conditions under which such concerts were given, for it is evident that seats were not reserved, and also that Handel conducted in the way to which we are now accustomed, not seated at the harpsichord (unless, indeed, the party's seats were at the side of the auditorium). But musical allusions such as this are comparatively rare during the Augustan age of our literature. Appreciation of music was ever more and more closely confined to a small body of *cognoscenti*, and the art gradually lost its interest for those who were not specialists, whether professional or amateur. Goldsmith, whose references to music are always to the point and accurate, seems to be the latest of the distinguished writers of the eighteenth century to make any allusion to music as if it were part of ordinary education.

It is not impossible that even the superficial knowledge of the Italian language which was needed for the enjoyment of the Opera may have done something to widen the gulf between general literature and music. That gulf remained yawning till well on in the nineteenth century, to the great disadvantage of musical progress, while to some extent letters suffered too.

As the musical forms became more and more highly organized, and the 'classical' ideals more and more widely recognized, a fresh obstacle arose to keep literary and musical people apart; for the former there was yet another language

to be learnt before the more elaborate patterns of construction could be assimilated, and those who had not time or opportunities for undertaking the trouble involved in the attempt to grasp the elements of musical form very naturally enrolled themselves among the really unmusical people, and were very properly angry when the few who had mastered what they themselves had shirked spoke a language to which they had no key.

It would probably be quite wrong to suppose that the period during which music was virtually banished from the world of letters was sterile in musical talent. The wind of artistic genius bloweth where it listeth, and it may well be that even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there were born in England some who in the more favourable conditions of Germany would have made a name for themselves as musicians, and here reference may be made to such careers as those of Pearsall and Pierson, the former of whom preferred to expatriate himself for reasons not unconnected with ambitions other than artistic, while he did obtain a considerable degree of recognition in England by his part-songs, which became household words among English amateurs. The latter, a son of 'Pearson on the Creed', sought in Germany (where he changed the spelling of his name) a congenial atmosphere he could not find at home, and eventually became eminent as a German composer, whose music to *Faust* was regularly employed whenever Goethe's drama was revived. As things then were in England, the exercise of music as a serious branch of art was completely discredited as an occupation for male children, though the daughters of any well-to-do family were compelled to learn pianoforte pieces whatever their natural propensities might be, and any young woman who could boast a shapely arm was similarly enjoined to play the harp. These performances of course went in and out of fashion, just as the custom of playing the flute was at one time quite normal among young men, so much so that, when the Cambridge University Musical Society was first started, the difficulty was to find employment for the very numerous amateur flautists, and to discover any

undergraduate students of stringed instruments. Though domestic performances are often referred to by Jane Austen, who often makes one of her characters go to 'the instrument', and be accompanied by some gentleman on the flute, she is careful not to give us any details, and it is evident that the music was rather a convenient way of disposing of characters that for the moment were not wanted, than an episode in the story. When we consider what was the standard probably attained on such occasions, it is impossible to be surprised that the number of professedly unmusical people should have been so markedly increased. In fact, the more delicate the musical sensibilities were, the greater the certainty that those who felt tortured by these displays would seek the company of others similarly afflicted, and would establish themselves as haters of music. Jane Austen wisely did not commit herself to any musical details and avoided the trap into which so many of the Victorian novelists fell, although we must not forget that Thackeray gives us a memorable picture of the performance of Mme. Schroeder-Devrient in *Fidelio*, while at the other end of the scale he created the celebrated 'finger' of Miss Wirt, a member as famous as Sir Willoughby Patterne's 'leg'. Those variations on 'Sich a gettin' upstairs' must surely have had an actual, audible existence before they reached immortality in one of the indisputably admirable passages in *The Book of Snobs*.

It is curious that George Eliot, who had a more definite musical training than the average lady of her time, should have committed herself to such a blunder as the passage in *Mr. Gilfil's Love Story*: 'Handel's "Messiah" stood open on the desk, at the chorus "All we like sheep", and Caterina threw herself at once into the impetuous intricacies of that magnificent fugue'; but she makes ample amends in *Middlemarch* and must evidently have made a complete study of the usual view of music held by two types of English gentlemen and one typical English lady. Mr. Brooke remarks, "'There is a lightness about the feminine mind—a touch and go—music, the fine arts, that kind of thing—they should study those up to a certain point, women should; but in a

light way, you know. A woman should be able to sit down and play you or sing you a good old English tune. That is what I like; though I have heard most things—been at the opera in Vienna: Gluck, Mozart, everything of that sort. But I'm a conservative in music—it's not like ideas, you know. I stick to the good old tunes." "Mr. Casaubon is not fond of the piano, and I am very glad he is not," said Dorothea, whose slight regard for domestic music and feminine fine art must be forgiven her, considering the small tinkling and smearing in which they chiefly consisted at that dark period.

"I never could look on it in the light of a recreation, to have my ears teased with measured noises," said Mr. Casaubon. "A tune much iterated has the ridiculous effect of making the words in my mind perform a sort of minuet to keep time. . . . As to the grander forms of music, worthy to accompany solemn celebrations, and even to serve as an educating influence according to the ancient conception, I say nothing, for with these we are not immediately concerned."

"No, but music of that sort I should enjoy," said Dorothea. "When we were coming home from Lausanne my uncle took us to hear the great organ at Freiberg, and it made me sob."

"That kind of thing is not healthy, my dear," said Mr. Brooke.'

The attitude of the average Englishman of the early nineteenth century, so well indicated by George Eliot, is illustrated in Charles Lamb's well-known lines beginning

Some cry up Haydn, some Mozart,
Just as the whim bites; for my part,
I do not care a farthing candle
For either of them, or for Handel.

One wonders how such a poem, if it could have been perpetrated, *mutatis mutandis*, in the spacious Elizabethan days, or at any moment when music was at peace with letters, would have been received, or what punishment would have been thought appropriate for such ribaldry.

Another instance of the width of the separation between

literature and music is to be found in the popularity and no doubt financial success of an absurd novel called *Charles Auchester*, in which the scarcely-disguised portraits of Mme. Sainton-Dolby, Mendelssohn, and Sterndale Bennett are framed in a mass of high-falutin' stuff that reveals an uncommonly superficial knowledge of the art to whose lovers it appeals.

Though the vogue of this book cannot be taken as a completely trustworthy sign of the average English reader's attitude towards music, it might be profitable to compare it with such a story as *Facing the Music* if an illustration were wanted of the change in public appreciation.

In the comfortable days of Queen Victoria, when the words 'glimpse' and 'sense' were still content with their position as nouns substantive, the graphic arts, unlike that of music, were not banished from literature or from general conversation, for among the small change of talk in the London season, one of the commonest conversational openings was 'Have you been to the Royal Academy?', but it would have been a solecism to ask one's neighbour if she had been to such and such a concert without first ascertaining whether she was musical or not.

Yet another indication of the width of the chasm between music and letters may be found in the condition of the song-writing of the period. Down to the time of Purcell, the words chosen by composers for musical treatment were such as were likely to be accepted by educated people, and these were set with due appreciation of the natural inflection or accentuation intended by the poet. In the days of the estrangement I have spoken of, the purveyors of songs either chose words of exquisite ineptitude, or, when they ventured to embark upon snatches of real poetry (as was occasionally done by men like Stevens, Bishop, Balfe, and others) they ignored the obvious accent and even the meaning of the words, or tortured them to fit their silly little tunes. Of the art that is sometimes called 'declamation', or more properly 'accentuation', there is hardly a trace until we come to the work of a great man like Parry, to whose skill, in this

regard, Milton's sonnet to Henry Lawes is entirely appropriate.

The case of Tennyson is very curious, for the ear that was so delicately attuned to the music of words was completely deaf to that of notes. He was aware of his deficiency, for he said to Hubert Parry: 'Browning is devoted to music, and knows a good deal about it; but there is no music in his verse. I know nothing about music, and don't care for it in the least; but my verse is full of music.' (The words are reported by Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, in his *Victorian Vintage*.) Yet he must have had an instinctive appreciation of what musicians call 'height' and 'depth'; for, when Stanford played through to him an album of settings of his songs by various writers, the poet made singularly apt comments on the way in which the melodies went up or down, and the songs he elected to praise on this account were exactly those which a musician would have picked out as coming from the pens of distinguished composers. The queer orchestra of 'flute, violin, bassoon', to which the dancers in *Maud* contrived to dance 'in tune', may be contrasted with Hardy's delicious descriptions of village music of the old type, and of the little groups of instruments that were used in country churches. The quarter of a century that separates *Maud* from the early books of Hardy did actually see the beginnings of the bridge that was to unite letters and music once more.

Browning, whose practical knowledge of music was considerable, is the most satisfactory of the Victorian poets who have dealt with music, and his words are sometimes so apt that the music he describes can be almost literally translated into notes; still, there is always that stumbling-block of 'the mode Palestrina' which neither Pope Gregory nor the authorities of the Solesmes chant could possibly identify. By a strange perversity, the most easily accessible edition of his complete works is a treasure-house of musical 'howlers', as indeed it is of blunders other than musical. For example, the editors' definition of fugue as 'a kind of melody', of 'girandole' as 'a dance', and of a toccata as 'an overture—

a touch-piece' can never be forgotten now that the chasm has been bridged and most people know enough to be amused, not misled, by these wonderful statements. One of the best musical 'howlers' was perpetrated after the breach between music and letters was healed. A well-known clerical poet in the North of England, in a pamphlet telling of the formation of some local industry and the opposition the committee met with, wrote 'A tumult arose, wild as a *Parsifal* chorus'. Some female novelist, whose book has passed into a well-merited oblivion, said: 'She roguishly played on her violin some short piece of Palestrina.'

If there were faults on the literary side, the musicians were perhaps even more to blame. Through the earlier half of the Victorian era, most of the professional musicians were apt to look upon their art as a mere trade, and few indeed were those who had enough imagination to consider it from a higher point of view. Of course there were some brilliant exceptions, but the bulk of cathedral organists and professional musicians were content to go on in their narrow groove of work, and it must be remembered that to become an expert musician is a 'whole-time job', what with the necessary technical practice and the education of others in the same branch of knowledge and skill. It must be remembered, too, that music stands apart from the other arts, since it alone, in Lord Balfour's words, 'is without external reference'. Still, when all allowances have been made, the fact remains that, as a body, the practitioners of music had not much general culture, or indeed much reverence for the ideals they were supposed to profess.

The typical Victorian organist would go to his desk and turn out an anthem because his wife wanted a new bonnet; and the remark made by the wife of a well-known conductor during the first season of the Richter Concerts is hardly an exaggeration: 'Don't talk to me about Richter; me and —, we've conducted the Philharmonic these twenty years and we don't want any foreigners coming to teach us how to conduct.' Whether or not such instances of a trade view of the art be actually true, it must be confessed that the Ger-

mans of that time did take a higher view of the art in which their nation had so long been eminent, and I am inclined to think that their artistic attitude, whether real or assumed, had something to do with the preference shown for so many years to everything that came out of Germany, so that a fifth-rate foreign performer was more highly paid and more warmly applauded than a first-rate English one.

The professional writers on music had little or no literary taste, and the jargon they used was calculated to disgust any educated reader who might chance upon the musical notices in the daily papers. This jargon was in some degree excusable when we remember how very few synonyms there are for the definite technical terms that must be used if any useful impression is to be conveyed. But the *clichés* we critics used were even farther removed from anything like a literary style; a favourite opening to an article upon any of the provincial festivals in the autumn was: '—— was *en fête* to-day. The show of bunting, though not so abundant as on former occasions', &c., &c. In the end of the nineteenth century we should not have been shocked by such a sentence as 'The rendition of this item, and which was reminiscent of the palmy days of the lyric stage', &c.

How and when was the chasm bridged over? It is not easy to say very definitely, but it is probable that the first pier of the bridge was firmly planted when Sir George Grove, whose place in the world of letters was assured,—was he not editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*?—allowed his musical enthusiasms full play in his work at the Crystal Palace and the inception of his great *Dictionary of Music*. If he was not the actual beginner of the musical renaissance in England, he used his great influence in the encouragement of that movement, and it was mainly due to him that the musical education of the country reached a point at which literary people were compelled to recognize the tuneful art.

An important part in this bridge-building was played by certain official appointments, like Parratt's connexion with Oxford, Stanford's with Cambridge, and Harford Lloyd's with Eton. Each of these succeeded men whose ideals, such

as they were, were bounded by the limits of the professional attitude already referred to. Each started a tradition of general cultivation, so that to-day it would be hard to find among cathedral organists any specimens of the old type, who would admit that they took no interest in general literature. Not only the standard of musical tuition in our great public schools, but the conditions in which it is given, have so marvellously improved that it is possible to believe in the recorded fact that the greatest masterpiece of music, Bach's Mass in B minor, was actually performed at Oundle School without extraneous help. Among those who 'assisted' at such a performance, whether as listeners or executants, there must have been many boys who would be classed as 'un-musical', but even these can no longer ignore music in the way their forefathers did, or echo their ancestors' favourite gibe: 'Musicians' heads are as empty as their fiddles.'

In many ways the institution of Musical Competition Festivals has done much to bring music into line with the other arts and with literature. For on the one hand the pattern of the festivals devised by Miss Mary Wakefield has given useful employment in their organization and direction to a very large number of intelligent people all over the country whose interest in music had been largely wasted in the old-fashioned amateur efforts, and whose friends, if not 'musical' themselves, are bound to recognize something of the importance of the art; and, on the other hand the improved culture of the young composers has led them to choose for their part-songs words of lasting beauty instead of the trumpery that was formerly thought good enough to be set to music.

The admirable catholicity of the Broadcasting programmes is another element in the healing of the old breach, as well as a sign of the reality of the healing process. To refer only to one side of its work; the weekly performance of the Bach cantatas, that series of masterpieces buried for so long, is not only an inestimable boon to musical hearers, but is an education in itself for the young people who have to learn them. It may be surmised that the mere neglect to switch off the

current has often compelled literary and musical listeners respectively to hear parts at least of each other's delights.

It may be a mere coincidence that so many of the old dichotomies, such as that between Science and Religion, are in course of being brought into agreement, and it stands to reason that every effort of the kind is to the manifest advantage of both sides.

As I have already said, it is inconceivable that Charles Lamb's ribald rhymes could have been accepted in the earlier days when music was the property of all men; and it is just as impossible to imagine *The Testament of Beauty* as existing before the fulfilment of the revival of music and its restoration to the world of letters:—

And if the Greek Muses wer a graceful company
yet hav we two, that in maturity transcend
the promise of their baby-prattle in Time's cradle,
Musick and Mathematick: coud their wet-nurses
but see these foster-children upgrown in full stature,
Pythagoras would marvel and Athena rejoice.

J. A. FULLER-MAITLAND.

WHAT CHAUCER REALLY DID TO *IL FILOSTRATO*

A GREAT deal of attention has deservedly been given to the relation between the *Book of Troilus* and its original, *Il Filostrato*, and Rossetti's collation placed a knowledge of the subject within the reach even of undergraduate inquirers. It is, of course, entirely right and proper that the greater part of this attention has been devoted to such points as specially illustrate the individual genius of Chaucer as a dramatist and a psychologist. But such studies, without any disgrace to themselves, often leave singularly undefined the historical position and affinities of a book; and if pursued intemperately they may leave us with a preposterous picture of the author as that abstraction, a *pure* individual, bound to no time nor place, or even obeying in the fourteenth century the aesthetics of the twentieth. It is possible that a good deal of misunderstanding still exists, even among instructed people, as to the real significance of the liberties that Chaucer took with his source. M. Legouis, in his study of Chaucer to which we all owe so much, remarks that Chaucer's additions 'implied a wider and more varied conception' than those of Boccaccio; and again 'Chaucer's aim was not like Boccaccio's to paint sentimentality alone, but to reflect life'. I do not wish to contradict either statement, but I am convinced that both are capable of conveying a false impression. What follows may be regarded as a cautionary gloss on M. Legouis's text. I shall endeavour to show that the process which *Il Filostrato* underwent at Chaucer's hands was first and foremost a process of *medievalization*. One aspect of this process has received some attention from scholars,¹ but its importance appears to me to be still insufficiently stressed. In what follows I shall, therefore, restate this aspect in my own terms while endeavouring to replace it in its context.

¹ v. Dodd, *Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower*, 1913.

Chaucer had never heard of a renaissance; and I think it would be difficult to translate either into the English or the Latin of his day our distinction between sentimental or conventional art on the one hand, and art which paints 'Life'—whatever this means—on the other. When first a manuscript beginning with the words *Alcun di giove sogliono il fuvore* came into his hands, he was, no doubt, aware of a difference between its contents and those of certain English and French manuscripts which he had read before. That some of the differences did not please him is apparent from his treatment. We may be sure, however, that he noticed and approved the new use of stanzas, instead of octosyllabic couplets, for narrative. He certainly thought the story a good story; he may even have thought it a story better told than any that he had yet read. But there was also, for Chaucer, a special reason why he should choose this story for his own retelling; and that reason largely determined the alterations that he made.

He was not yet the Chaucer of the *Canterbury Tales*: he was the *grant translateur* of the *Roman de la Rose*, the author of the *Book of the Duchesse*, and probably of 'many a song and many a lecherous lay'.¹ In other words he was the great living interpreter in English of *l'amour courtois*. Even in 1390, when Gower produced the first version of his *Confessio Amantis*, such faithful interpretation of the love tradition was still regarded as the typical and essential function of Chaucer: he is Venus' 'disciple' and 'poete', with whose 'ditees and songes glade . . . the lond fulfild is overal'. And Gower still has hopes that Chaucer's existing treatments of *Frauendienst* are only the preludes to some great 'testament' which will 'sette an ende of alle his werk'.² These expectations were, of course, disappointed; and it is possibly to that disappointment, rather than to a hypothetical quarrel (for which only the most ridiculous grounds have been assigned), that we should attribute Gower's removal of this passage from the second text of the *Confessio Amantis*. It had become apparent that Chaucer was following a different

¹ *C. T.*, I 1086.

² *Conf. Am.* viii. 2941–58.

line of development, and the reference made to him by Venus had ceased to be appropriate.

It was, then, as a poet of courtly love that Chaucer approached *Il Filostrato*. There is no sign as yet that he wished to desert the courtly tradition; on the contrary, there is ample evidence that he still regarded himself as its exponent. But the narrative bent of his genius was already urging him, not to desert this tradition, but to pass from its doctrinal treatment (as in the *Romance of the Rose*) to its narrative treatment. Having preached it, and sung it, he would now exemplify it: he would show the code put into action in the course of a story—without prejudice (as we shall see) to a good deal of doctrine and pointing of the amorous moral by the way. The thing represents a curious return upon itself of literary history. If Chaucer had lived earlier he would, we may be sure, have found just the model that he desired in Chrestien de Troyes. But by Chaucer's time certain elements, which Chrestien had held together in unity, had come apart and taken an independent life. Chrestien had combined, magnificently, the interest of the story, and the interest of erotic doctrine and psychology. His successors had been unable or unwilling to achieve this union. Perhaps, indeed, the two things had to separate in order that each might grow to maturity; and in many of Chrestien's psychological passages one sees the embryonic allegory struggling to be born.¹ Whatever the reason may be, such a separation took place. The story sets up on its own in the prose romances—the 'French book' of Malory: the doctrine and psychology set up on their own in the *Romance of the Rose*. In this situation if a poet arose who accepted the doctrines and also had a narrative genius, then *a priori* such a poet might be expected to combine again the two elements—now fully grown—which, in their rudimentary form, had lain together in Chrestien. But this is exactly the sort of poet that Chaucer was; and this (as we shall see) is what Chaucer did. The *Book of Troilus* shows, in fact, the

¹ v. *Lancelot*, 369-81, 2844-61; *Yvain*, 6001 et seq., 2639 et seq.; *Cligès*, 5855 et seq.

very peculiar literary phenomenon of Chaucer groping back, unknowingly, through the very slightly medieval work of Boccaccio, to the genuinely medieval formula of Chrestien. We may be thankful that Chaucer did not live in the high noon of Chrestien's celebrity; for, if he had, we should probably have lost much of the originality of Troilus. He would have had less motive for altering Chrestien than for altering Boccaccio, and probably would have altered him less.

Approaching *Il Filostrato* from this angle, Chaucer, we may be sure, while feeling the charm of its narrative power, would have found himself, at many passages, uttering the Middle English equivalent of 'This will never do!' In such places he did not hesitate, as he might have said, to *amenden* and to *reducen* what was *amis* in his author. The majority of his modifications are corrections of errors which Boccaccio had committed against the code of courtly love; and modifications of this kind have not been entirely neglected by criticism. It has not, however, been sufficiently observed that these are only part and parcel of a general process of medievalization. They are, indeed, the most instructive part of that process, and even in the present discussion must claim the chief place; but in order to restore them to their proper setting it will be convenient to make a division of the different capacities in which Chaucer approached his original. These will, of course, be found to overlap in the concrete; but that is no reason for not plucking them ideally apart in the interests of clarity.

I. Chaucer approached his work as an 'Historial' poet contributing to the story of Troy. I do not mean that he necessarily believed his tale to be wholly or partly a record of fact, but his attitude towards it in this respect is different from Boccaccio's. Boccaccio, we may surmise, wrote for an audience who were beginning to look at poetry in our own way. For them *Il Filostrato* was mainly, though not entirely, 'a new poem by Boccaccio'. Chaucer wrote for an audience who still looked at poetry in the medieval fashion—a fashion for which the real literary units were 'matters', 'stories', and the like, rather than individual authors. For them the

Book of Troilus was partly, though of course only partly, 'a new bit of the Troy story', or even 'a new bit of the matter of Rome'. Hence Chaucer expects them to be interested not only in the personal drama between his little group of characters but in that whole world of story which makes this drama's context: like children looking at a landscape picture and wanting to know what happens to the road after it disappears into the frame. For the same reason they will want to know his authorities. Passages in which Chaucer has departed from his original to meet this demand will easily occur to the memory. Thus, in i. 141 et seq., he excuses himself for not telling us more about the military history of the Trojan war, and adds what is almost a footnote to tell his audience where they can find that missing part of the story—'in Omer, or in Dares, or in Dyte'. Boccaccio had merely sketched in, in the preceding stanza, a general picture of war sufficient to provide the background for his own story—much as a dramatist might put *Alarums within* in a stage direction: he has in view an audience fully conscious that all this is mere necessary 'setting' or hypothesis. Thus again, in iv. 120 et seq., Chaucer inserts into the speech of *Calkas* an account of the quarrel between *Phebus* and *Nep-tunus* and *Lameadown*. This is not dramatically necessary. All that was needed for *Calkas's* argument has already been given in lines 111 and 112 (cf. *Filostrato*, iv. xi). The Greek leaders did not need to be told about Laomedon; but Chaucer is not thinking of the Greek leaders; he is thinking of his audience who will gladly learn, or be reminded, of that part of the cycle. At lines 204 et seq. he inserts a note on the later history of *Antenor* for the same reason. In the fifth book he inserts unnecessarily lines 1464–1510 from the story of Thebes. The spirit in which this is done is aptly expressed in his own words:

And so descendeth down from gestes olde

To Diomede.

(v. 1511, 1512)

The whole 'matter of Rome' is still a unity, with a structure and life of its own. That part of it which the poem in hand

is treating, which is, so to speak, in focus, must be seen fading gradually away into its 'historial' surroundings. The method is the antithesis of that which produces the 'framed' story of a modern writer: it is a method which romance largely took over from the epic.

II. Chaucer approached his work as a pupil of the rhetoricians and a firm believer in the good, old, and now neglected maxim of Dante: *omnis qui versificatur suos versus exornare debet in quantum potest*. This side of Chaucer's poetry has been illustrated by Mr. Manly¹ so well that most readers will not now be in danger of neglecting it. A detailed application of this new study to the *Book of Troilus* would here detain us too long, but a cursory glance shows that Chaucer found his original too short and proceeded in many places to 'amplify' it. He began by abandoning the device—that of invoking his lady instead of the Muses—whereby Boccaccio had given a lyrical instead of a rhetorical turn to the invocation, and substituted an address to *Thesiphone* (*Filostrato*, I. i–v, cf. *Troilus*, i. 1–14). He added at the beginning of his second book an invocation of *Cleo* and an apology of the usual medieval type, for the defects of his work (ii. 15–21). Almost immediately afterwards he inserted a *descriptio* of the month of a May (an innovation which concerned him as poet of courtly love no less than as rhetorician) which is extremely beautiful and appropriate, but which follows, none the less, conventional lines. The season is fixed by astronomical references, and *Proigne* and *Tereus* appear just where we should expect them (ii. 50–6, 64–70). In the third book the scene of the morning parting between the two lovers affords a complicated example of Chaucer's medievalization. In his original (III. xlii) Chaucer read

Ma poich' e galli presso al giorno udiro
Cantar per l'aurora che surgea.

He proceeded to amplify this, first by the device of *Circuitio* or *Circumlocutio*; *galli*, with the aid of Alanus de Insulis, became 'the cok, comune astrologer'. Not content with this,

¹ *Chaucer and the Rhetoricians*, Warton Lecture XVII, 1926.

he then repeated the sense of that whole phrase by the de *Expolitio*, of which the formula is *Mutiplice forma Dissimulatur idem: varius sis et tamen idem*,¹ and the theme 'De came' is varied with *Lucifer* and *Fortuna Minor*, till it a whole stanza (iii. 1415-21). In the next stanza of Bocca he found a short speech by *Griseida*, expressing her sor at the parting which dawn necessitated: but this was enough for him. As poet of love he wanted his *alba* rhetorician he wanted his *apostropha*. He therefore inserted sixteen lines of address to Night (1427-42), during which secured the additional advantage, from the medieval point of view, of 'som doctryne' (1429-32). In lines 1452-70 inserted antiphonally Troilus's *alba*, for which the only b in Boccaccio was the line *Il giorno che venia maledice* (III. xlv). The passage is an object lesson for those who tend to identify the traditional with the dull. Its magic goes back to the ancient sources of medieval love poetry notably to Ovid, *Amores*, i. 13, and it has been handled of before, and better handled, by the Provençals. Yet it is responsible for one of the most vivid and beautiful expressions that Chaucer ever used.

Accursed be thy coming into Troye

For every bore hath oon of thy bright eyen.

A detailed study of the *Book of Troilus* would reveal 'rhetoricization', if I may coin an ugly word, as the common quality of many of Chaucer's additions. As examples *Apostropha* alone I may mention, before leaving this part of the subject, iii. 301 et seq. (*O tonge*), 617 et seq. (*Be Fortune*), 715 et seq. (*O Venus*), and 813 et seq. where Chaucer is following Boethius.

III. Chaucer approached his work as a poet of *doctrine* and sentence. This is a side of his literary character which twentieth-century fashions encourage us to overlook, but of course, no honest historian can deny it. His contemporaries and immediate successors did not. His own creatures, pilgrims, regarded *mirth* and *doctryne*,² or, as it is elsewhere

¹ Geoffroi de Vinsauf, *Poetr. Nov.*, 220-5.

² *Canterbury Tales*, B 2125.

expressed, *sentence* and *solas*,¹ as the two alternative, and equally welcome, excellences of a story. In the same spirit Hoccleve praises Chaucer as the *mirour of fructuous entendement* and the universal *fadir in science*²—a passage, by the by, to be recommended to those who are astonished that the fifteenth century should imitate those elements of Chaucer's genius which it enjoyed instead of those which we enjoy. In respect of *doctryne*, then, Chaucer found his original deficient, and *amended* it. The example which will leap to every one's mind is the Boethian discussion on free will (iv. 946–1078). To Boccaccio, I suspect, this would have seemed as much an excrescence as it does to the modern reader; to the unjaded appetites of Chaucer's audience mere thickness in a wad of manuscript was a merit. If the author was so 'courteous beyond covenant' as to give you an extra bit of *doctryne* (or of story), who would be so churlish as to refuse it on the pedantic ground of irrelevance? But this passage is only one of many in which Chaucer departs from his original for the sake of giving his readers interesting general knowledge or philosophical doctrine. In iii. 1387 et seq., finding Boccaccio's attack upon *gli avari* a little bare and unsupported, he throws out, as a species of buttress, the *exempla* of *Myda* and *Crassus*.³ In the same book he has to deal with the second assignation of Troilus and Cressida. Boccaccio gave him three stanzas of dialogue (*Filostrato*, III. lxvi–lxviii), but Chaucer rejected them and preferred—in curious anticipation of Falstaff's thesis about pitch—to assure his readers, on the authority of *thise clerkes wyse* (iii. 1691) that *felicitee* is felicitous, though *Troilus* and *Criseyde* enjoyed something better than *felicitee*. In the same stanza he also intends, I think, an allusion to the *sententia* that occurs elsewhere in the Franklin's Tale.⁴ In iv. 197–203, immediately before his *historial* insertion about Antenor, he introduces a *sentence* from Juvenal, partly

¹ Ibid., A 798.

² *Regement*, 1963 et seq.

³ This might equally well have been treated above in our rhetorical section. The instructed reader will recognize that a final distinction between *doctrinal* and *rhetorical* aspects, is not possible in the Middle Ages.

⁴ C. T., F 762.

for its own sake, partly in order that the story of Antenor may thus acquire an exemplary, as well as a *historial* value. In iv. 323-8 he inserts a passage on the great *locus communis* of Fortune and her wheel.

In the light of this sententious bias, Chaucer's treatment of Pandarus should be reconsidered, and it is here that a somewhat subtle exercise of the historical imagination becomes necessary. On the one hand, he would be a dull reader, and the victim rather than the pupil of history, who would take all the doctrinal passages in Chaucer seriously: that the speeches of Chauntecleer and Pertelote and of the Wyf of Bath not only *are* funny by reason of their sententiousness and learning, but are intended to be funny, and funny by that reason, is indisputable. On the other hand, to assume that sententiousness became funny for Chaucer's readers as easily as it becomes funny for us, is to misunderstand the fourteenth century: such an assumption will lead us to the preposterous view that *Melibee* (or even the Parson's Tale) is a comic work—a view not much mended by Mr. Mackail's suggestion that there are some jokes *too* funny to excite laughter and that *Melibee* is one of these. A clear recognition that our own age is quite abnormally sensitive to the funny side of sententiousness, to possible hypocrisy, and to dulness, is absolutely necessary for any one who wishes to understand the past. We must face the fact that Chaucer's audience could listen with gravity and interest to edifying matter which would set a modern audience sleeping or sniggering. The application of this to Pandarus is a delicate business. Every reader must interpret Pandarus for himself, and I can only put forward my own interpretation very tentatively. I believe that Pandarus is meant to be a comic character, but not, by many degrees, so broadly comic as he appears to some modern readers. There is, for me, no doubt that Chaucer intended us to smile when he made Troilus exclaim

What knowe I of the queene Niobe ?

Lat be thyne olde ensaumples, I thee preye. (I. 759)

But I question if he intended just that sort of smile which we actually give him. For me the fun lies in the fact that

poor Troilus says what I have been wishing to say for some time. For Chaucer's hearers the point was a little different. The suddenness of the gap thus revealed between Troilus's state of mind and Pandarus's words cast a faintly ludicrous air on what had gone before: it made the theorizing and the *exempla* a little funny in retrospect. But it is quite probable that they had not been funny till then: the discourse on contraries (i. 631-44), the *exemplum* of Paris and Oenone, leading up to the theme 'Physician heal thyself' (652-72), the doctrine of the Mean applied to secrecy in love (687-93), the *sentences* from Solomon (695) and elsewhere (708), are all of them the sort of thing that can be found in admittedly serious passages,¹ and it may well be that Chaucer 'had it both ways'. His readers were to be, first of all, edified by the doctrine for its own sake, and then (slightly) amused by the contrast between this edification and Troilus's obstinate attitude of the plain man. If this view be accepted it will have the consequence that Chaucer intended an effect of more subtlety than that which we ordinarily receive. We get the broadly comic effect—a loquacious and unscrupulous old uncle talks solemn platitude at interminable length. For Chaucer, a *textuel* man talked excellent doctrine which we enjoy and by which we are edified: but at the same time we see that this 'has its funny side'. Ours is the crude joke of laughing at admitted rubbish: Chaucer's the much more lasting joke of laughing at 'the funny side' of that which, even while we laugh, we admire. To the present writer this reading of Pandarus does not appear doubtful; but it depends to some extent, on a mere 'impression' about the quality of the Middle Ages, an impression hard to correct, if it is an error, and hard to teach, if it is a truth. For this reason I do not insist on my interpretation. If, however, it is accepted, many of the speeches of Pandarus which are commonly regarded as having a purely dramatic significance will have to be classed among the examples of Chaucer's doctrinal or sententious insertions.²

¹ Cf. *C. T.*, I 140-155.

² From another point of view Pandarus can be regarded as the *Vekke* of the *R. R.* (cf. Thessala in *Cligès*) taken out of allegory into drama and changed in sex, so as to 'double' the rôles of *Vekke* and *Frend*.

IV. Finally, Chaucer approached his work as the poet of courtly love. He not only modified his story so as to make it a more accurate representation in action of the orthodox erotic code, but he also went out of his way to emphasize its didactic element. Andreas Capellanus had given instructions to lovers; Guillaume de Lorris had given instructions veiled and decorated by allegory; Chaucer carries the process a stage further and gives instruction by example in the course of a concrete story. But he does not forget the instructional side of his work. In the following paragraphs I shall sometimes quote parallels to Chaucer's innovations from the earlier love literature, but it must not be thought that I suppose my quotations to represent Chaucer's immediate source.

1. Boccaccio in his induction, after invoking his mistress instead of the Muses, inserts (I. vi) a short request for lovers in general that they will pray for him. The prayer itself is disposed of in a single line

Per me vi prego ch'amore preghiare.

This is little more than a conceit, abandoned as soon as it is used: a modern poet could almost do the like. Chaucer devotes four stanzas (i. 22-49) to this prayer. If we make an abstract of both passages, Boccaccio will run 'Pray for me to Love', while Chaucer will run 'Remember, all lovers, your old unhappiness, and pray, for the unsuccessful, that they may come to solace; for me, that I may be enabled to tell this story; for those in despair, that they may die; for the fortunate, that they may persevere, and please their ladies in such manner as may advance the glory of Love'. The important point here is not so much that Chaucer expands his original, as that he renders it more liturgical: his prayer, with its careful discriminations in intercession for the various recognized stages of the amorous life, and its final reference *ad Amoris maiorem gloriam*, is a collect. Chaucer is emphasizing that parody, or imitation, or rivalry—I know not which to call it—of the Christian religion which was inherent in traditional *Frauendienst*. The thing can be traced back

to Ovid's purely ironical worship of Venus and Amor in the *De Arte Amatoria*. The idea of a love religion is taken up and worked out, though still with equal flippancy, in terms of medieval Christianity, by the twelfth-century poet of the *Concilium Romaricimontis*,¹ where Love is given Cardinals (female), the power of visitation, and the power of cursing. Andreas Capellanus carried the process a stage further and gave Love the power of distributing reward and punishment after death. But while his hell of cruel beauties (*Siccitas*), his purgatory of beauties promiscuously kind (*Humiditas*), and his heaven of true lovers (*Amoenitas*)² can hardly be other than playful, Andreas deals with the love religion much more seriously than the author of the *Concilium*. The lover's qualification is *morum probitas*: he must be truthful and modest, a good Catholic, clean in his speech, hospitable, and ready to return good for evil. There is nothing in *saeculo bonum* which is not derived from love:³ it may even be said in virtue of its severe standard of constancy, to be 'a kind of chastity'—*reddit hominem castitatis quasi virtute decoratum*.⁴

In all this we are far removed from the tittering nuns and *clerici* of the *Concilium*. In Chrestien, the scene in which Lancelot kneels and adores the bed of Guinevere (as if before a *corseynt*)⁵ is, I think, certainly intended to be read seriously: what mental reservations the poet himself had on the whole business is another question. In Dante the love religion has become wholly and unequivocally serious by fusing with the real religion: the distance between the *Amor deus omnium quotquot sunt amantium* of the *Concilium*, and the *segno di pauroso aspetto* of the *Vita Nuova*,⁶ is the measure of the tradition's real flexibility and universality. It is this quasi-religious element in the content, and this liturgical element in the diction, which Chaucer found lacking

¹ *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Alterthum*, vii, pp. 160 et seq.

² Andreas Capellanus, *De Arte Honeste Amandi*, ed. Trojel, i. 6 D² (pp. 91-108).

³ *Ibid.*, i. 6 A (p. 28).

⁵ *Lancelot*, 4670, 4734 et seq.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 4 (p. 10).

⁶ *Vit. Nuov.* iii.

in his original at the very opening of the book, and which he supplied. The line

That Love hem bringe in hevene to solas

is particularly instructive.

2. In the Temple scene (Chaucer, i. 155-315. *Filostrato*, i. xix-xxxii) Chaucer found a stanza which it was very necessary to *reducen*. It was Boccaccio's twenty-third, in which Triolus, after indulging in his 'cooling card for lovers', mentions that he has himself been singed with that fire, and even hints that he has had his successes; but the pleasures were not worth the pains. The whole passage is a typical example of that Latin spirit which in all ages (except perhaps our own) has made Englishmen a little uncomfortable; the hero must be a lady-killer from the very beginning, or the audience will think him a milksop and a booby. To have abashed, however temporarily, these strutting Latinisms, is not least among the virtues of medieval *Frauendienst*: and for Chaucer as its poet, this stanza was emphatically one of those that 'would never do'. He drops it quietly out of its place, and thus brings the course of his story nearer to that of the *Romance of the Rose*. The parallelism is so far intact. Troilus, an unattached young member of the courtly world, wandering idly about the Temple, is smitten with Love. In the same way the Dreamer having been admitted by Ydelnesse into the garden goes 'Pleying along ful merily'¹ until he looks in the fatal well. If he had already met Love outside the garden the whole allegory would have to be reconstructed.

3. A few lines lower Chaucer found in his original the words

il quale amor trafisse

Più ch'alcun altro, pria del tempio uscisse. (i. xxv)

Amor trafisse in Boccaccio is hardly more than a literary variant for 'he fell in love': the allegory has shrunk into a metaphor and even that metaphor is almost unconscious and fossilized. Over such a passage one can imagine Chaucer

¹ R. R. 1329 (English Version).

exclaiming, *tantamne rem tam negligenter?* He at once goes back through the metaphor to the allegory that begot it, and gives us his own thirtieth stanza (l. 204-10) on the god of Love in anger bending his bow. The image is very ancient and goes back at least as far as Apollonius Rhodius.¹ Ovid was probably the intermediary who conveyed it to the Middle Ages. Chrestien uses it, with particular emphasis on Love as the avenger of contempt.² But Chaucer need not have gone further to find it than to the *Romance of the Rose*:³ with which, here again, he brings his story into line.

4. But even this was not enough. Boccaccio's *Amor trafisse* had occurred in a stanza where the author apostrophizes the *Cecità delle mondane menti*, and reflects on the familiar contrast between human expectations and the actual course of events. But this general contrast seemed weak to the poet of courtly love: what he wanted was the explicit erotic *moral*, based on the special contrast between the *ὑβρις* of the young scoffer and the complete surrender which the offended deity soon afterwards extracted from him. This conception, again, owes much to Ovid; but between Ovid and the Middle Ages comes the later practice of the ancient Epithalamium during the decline of antiquity and the Dark Ages: to which, as I hope to show elsewhere, the system of courtly love as a whole is heavily indebted. Thus in the fifth century Sidonius Apollinaris in an Epithalamium, makes the bridegroom just such another as Troilus: a proud scoffer humbled by Love. Amor brings to Venus the triumphant news

Nova gaudia porto
Felicis praedae, genetrix. Calet ille *superbus*
Ruricius.⁴

Venus replies

gaudemus nate, *rebellem*
Quod vincis.

In a much stranger poem, by the Bishop Ennodius, it is not the *ὑβρις* of a single youth, but of the world, that has stung

¹ *Argonaut*, iii. 275 et seq.

² *Cligès*, 460; cf. 770.

³ *R. R.* 1330 et seq.; 1715 et seq.

⁴ *Sid. Apoll.* Carm. xi. 61.

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the deities of love into retributive action. Cupid and Venus are introduced deploring the present state of Europe

Frigida consumens multorum possidet artus
Virginitas.¹

and Venus meets the situation by a threat that she'll 'larn 'em':

Discant populi tunc crescere divam
Cum neglecta iacet.²

They conclude by attacking one Maximus and thus bringing about the marriage which the poem was written to celebrate. Venantius Fortunatus, in his Epithalamium for Brunchild reproduces, together with Ennodius's spring morning, Ennodius's boastful Cupid, and makes the god, after an exhibition of his archery, announce to his mother, *mihi vincitur alter Achilles*.³ In Chrestien the rôle of tamed rebel is transferred to the woman. In *Cligès* Soredamors confesses that Love has humbled her pride by force, and doubts whether such extorted service will find favour.⁴ In strict obedience to this tradition Chaucer inserts his lines 214–31, emphasizing the dangers of *ὑβρις* against Love and the certainty of its ultimate failure; and we may be thankful that he did, since it gives us the lively and touching simile of *proude Bayard*. Then, mindful of his instructional purpose, he adds four stanzas more (239–66), in which he directly exhorts his readers to avoid the error of Troilus, and that for two reasons: firstly, because Love *cannot* be resisted (this is the policeman's argument—we may as well 'come quiet'); and secondly because Love is a thing 'so vertuous in kinde'. The second argument, of course, follows traditional lines, and recalls Andreas's theory of Love as the source of all secular virtue.

5. In lines 330–50 Chaucer again returns to Troilus's scoffing—a scoffing this time assumed as a disguise. I do not wish to press the possibility that Chaucer in this passage is attempting, in virtue of his instructional purpose, to stress

¹ Ennodius Carm. I, iv. 57.

² Ibid. 84.

³ Venant. Fort. VI, i.

⁴ *Cliges*, 682, 241.

the lover's virtue of secrecy more than he found it stressed in his original; for Boccaccio, probably for different reasons, does not leave that side of the subject untouched. But it is interesting to note a difference in the content between this scoffing and that of Boccaccio (*Filostrato* I. xxi, xxii). Boccaccio's is based on contempt for women, fickle as wind, and heartless. Chaucer's is based on the hardships of love's *lay* or religion: hardships arising from the uncertainty of the most orthodox *observances*, which may lead to various kinds of harm and may be taken amiss by the lady. Boccaccio dethrones the deity: Chaucer complains of the severity of the cult. It is the difference between an atheist and a man who humorously insists that he 'is not of religioun'.

6. In the first dialogue between Troilus and Pandarus the difference between Chaucer and his original can best be shown by an abstract. Boccaccio (II. vi-xxviii) would run roughly as follows:

T. Well, if you must know, I am in love. But don't ask me with whom (vi-viii).

P. Why did you not tell me long ago? I could have helped you (ix).

T. What use would *you* be? Your own suit never succeeded (ix).

P. A man can often guide others better than himself (x).

T. I can't tell you, because it is a relation of yours (xv).

P. A fig for relations! Who is it? (xvi).

T. (after a pause) Griseida.

P. Splendid! Love has fixed your heart in a good place. She is an admirable person. The only trouble is that she is rather *pie* (*onesta*): but I'll soon see to that (xxiii). Every woman is amorous at heart: they are only anxious to save their reputations (xxvii). I'll do all I can for you (xxviii).

Chaucer (I. 603-1008) would be more like this:

T. Well, if you must know, I am in love. But don't ask me with whom (603-16).

P. Why did you not tell me long ago? I could have helped you (617-20).

T. What use would *you* be? Your own suit never succeeded (621-3).

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P. A man can often guide others better than himself, as we see from the analogy of the whetstone. Remember the doctrine of contraries, and what Oenone said. As regards secrecy, remember that all virtue is a mean between two extremes (624-700).

T. Do leave me alone (760).

P. If you die, how will she interpret it? Many lovers have served for twenty years without a single kiss. But should they despair? No, they should think it a guerdon even to serve (761-819).

T. (much moved by this argument, 820-6) What shall I do? Fortune is my foe (827-40).

P. Her wheel is always turning. Tell me who your mistress is. If it were my sister, you should have her (841-61).

T. (after a pause)—My sweet foe is Criseyde (870-5).

P. Splendid: Love has fixed your heart in a good place. This ought to gladden you, firstly, because to love such a lady is nothing but good: secondly, because if she has all these virtues, she must have Pity too. You are very fortunate that Love has treated you so well, considering your previous scorn of him. You must repent at once (874-935).

T. (kneeling) *Mea Culpa!* (936-8).

P. Good. All will now come right. Govern yourself properly: you know that a divided heart can have no grace. I have reasons for being hopeful. No man or woman was ever born who was not apt for love, either natural or celestial: and celestial love is not fitted to Criseyde's years. I will do all I can for you. Love converted you of his goodness. Now that you are converted, you will be as conspicuous among his saints as you formerly were among the sinners against him (939-1008).

In this passage it is safe to say that every single alteration by Chaucer is an alteration in the direction of medievalism. The Whetstone, Oenone, Fortune, and the like we have already discussed: the significance of the remaining innovations may now be briefly indicated. In Boccaccio the reason for Troilus's hesitation in giving the name is Criseida's relationship to Pandaro: and like a flash comes back Pandaro's startling answer. In Chaucer his hesitation is due to the courtly

lover's certainty that 'she nil to noon suich wrecche as I be wonne' (778) and that 'full harde it wer to helpen in this cas' (836). Pandaro's original

Se quella ch'ami fosse mia sorella

A mio potere avrai tuo piacer d'ella

(xvi)

is reproduced in the English, but by removing the words that provoked it in the Italian (*E tua parenta*, xv) Chaucer makes it merely a general protestation of boundless friendship in love, instead of a cynical defiance of scruples already raised (Chaucer 861). Boccaccio had delighted to bring the purities of family life and the profligacy of his young man about town into collision, and to show the triumph of the latter. Chaucer keeps all the time within the charmed circle of *Frauen dienst* and allows no conflict but that of the lover's hopes and fears. Again, Boccaccio's Pandaro has no argument to use against Troilo's silence, but the argument 'I may help you'. Chaucer's Pandarus, on finding that this argument fails, proceeds to expound the code. The fear of dishonour in the lady's eyes, the duty of humble but not despairing service in the face of all discouragement, and the acceptance of this service as its own reward, form the substance of six stanzas in the English text (lines 768-819): at least, if we accept four lines very characteristically devoted to 'Ticius' and what 'bokes telle' of him. Even more remarkable is the difference between the behaviour of the two Pandars after the lady's name has been disclosed. Boccaccio's, cynical as ever, encourages Troilo by the reflection that female virtue is not really a serious obstacle: Chaucer's makes the virtue of the lady itself the ground for hope—arguing scholastically that the *genus* of virtue implies that *species* thereof which is *Pitee* (897-900). In what follows, Pandarus, while continuing to advise, becomes an adviser of a slightly different sort. He instructs Troilus not so much on his relationship to the Lady as on his relationship to Love. He endeavours to awaken in Troilus a devout sense of his previous sins against that deity (904-30) and is not satisfied without confession (931-8), briefly enumerates the command-

ments (953-9), and warns his penitent of the dangers of a divided heart.

In establishing such a case as mine, the author who transfers relentlessly to his article all the passages listed in his private notes can expect nothing but weariness from the reader. If I am criticized, I am prepared to produce for my contention many more evidential passages of the same kind. I am prepared to show how many of the beauties introduced by Chaucer, such as the song of Antigone or the riding past of Troilus, are introduced to explain and mitigate and delay the surrender of the heroine, who showed in Boccaccio a facility condemned by the courtly code.¹ I am prepared to show how Chaucer never forgets his erotically didactic purpose; and how, anticipating criticism as a teacher of love, he guards himself by reminding us that

For to winne love in sondry ages
In sondry londes, sondry ben usages.² (ii. 27)

But the reader whose stomach is limited would be tired, and he who is interested may safely be left to follow the clue for himself. Only one point, and that a point of principle, remains to be treated in full. Do I, or do I not, lie open to the criticism of Professor Abercrombie's 'Liberty of Interpreting'?³

The Professor *quem honoris causa nomino* urges us not to turn from the known effect which an ancient poem has upon us to speculation about the effect which the poet intended it to have. The application of this criticism which may be directed against me would run as follows: 'If Chaucer's *Troilus* actually produces on us an effect of greater realism and nature and freedom than its original, why should we assume that this effect was accidentally produced in the attempt to conform to an outworn convention?' If the charge is grounded, it is, to my mind, a very grave one. My reply

¹ A particularly instructive comparison could be drawn between the Chaucerian Cresseide's determination to yield, yet to seem to yield by force and deception, and Bialacoil's behaviour. *R. R.* 12607-88: specially 12682, 3.

² Cf. ii. 1023 et seq.

³ *Proceedings of Brit. Acad.*, vol. xvi, Shakespeare Lecture, 1930.

is that such a charge begs the very question which I have most at heart in this paper, and but for which I should regard my analysis as the aimless burrowings of a thesis-monger. I would retort upon my imagined critic with another question. This poem is more lively and of deeper human appeal than its original. I grant it. This poem conforms more closely than its original to the system of courtly love. I claim to prove it. What then is the natural conclusion to draw? Surely, that courtly love itself, in spite of all its shabby origins and pedantic rules, is at bottom more agreeable to those elements in human, or at least in European, nature, which last longest, than the cynical Latin gallantries of Boccaccio? The world of Chrestien, of Guillaume de Lorris, and of Chaucer, is nearer to the world universal, is less of a closed system, than the world of Ovid, of Congreve, of Anatole France.

This is doctrine little palatable to the age in which we live: and it carries with it another doctrine that may seem no less paradoxical—namely, that certain medieval things are more universal, in that sense more classical, can claim more confidently a *securus judicat*, than certain things of the Renaissance. To make Herod your villain is more human than to make Tamburlaine your hero. The politics of Machiavelli are provincial and temporary beside the doctrine of the *jus gentium*. The love-lore of Andreas, though a narrow stream, is a stream tending to the universal sea. Its waters move. For real stagnancy and isolation we must turn to the decorative lakes dug out far inland at such a mighty cost by Mr. George Moore; to the more popular corporation swimming-baths of Dr. Marie Stopes, or to the teeming marsh-lands of the late D. H. Lawrence, whose depth the wisest knows not and on whose bank the hart gives up his life rather than plunge in:

pær mæg nihta gehwæm niðwundor seon
Fyr on flode!

C. S. LEWIS.

JORROCKS: A CONVERSATION

The scene is a room in the ancient City of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. It is late, but through the tobacco-smoke AELIUS and BARBARUS may still be discerned.

Barbarus. True, we work for our living hereabouts, and we don't waste much of the proceeds sacrificing to the Muses. Some music we have, but we don't like Boetry and we don't like Bainting, and we cultivate Mother Mnemosyne herself rather than Clio—Archaeology rather than History.

Aelius. It's not even that so much: we have so little of our own. On the literary map of England the North-East is all but a blank. A half-share in Swinburne—

Bar. Or a quarter—

Ael. Or a quarter: even when he wanted to recall Northumbrian speech he had to fall back on literary Scots. And he is all we have.

Bar. Swinburne was essentially a Literary Bloke, and nobody has made Northumbrian malleable yet, in verse or prose. But you forget Akenside—

Ael. Truly a refulgent crown of glory!

Bar. And like nearly everybody here, you forget Surtees.

Ael. The Jorrocks Surtees?

Bar. Even he. A Northumbrian born; articled to a solicitor in this very city; owner of Hamsterley, only fifteen miles out as you go to Shotley Bridge; J.P., County Councillor, High Sheriff of Durham, and so on: and you forget him. Why, the only Novocastrian in English Literature is James Pigg, and—throw me over *Handley Cross*, on the second shelf there—James Pigg not only proclaims his nativity, but proves it. 'Ma fore elder John, ye see, John Pigg, willed away arle wor brass to the Formory, ye see, and left me wi' fairly nout. Gin ye gan to the Newcassel F'ormory, ye'll see arle aboot it, in great goud letters, clagged agin the walls.' And if you go to the Royal Victoria Infirmary you'll see it too, and you can look up John Pigg in the *Proceedings* of the Society of

Antiquaries, though you'll find nothing about his more famous descendant.

Ael. Well, Surtees—Akenside, Akenside—Surtees: what is there in it?

Bar. There's a lot in it. Who now reads Akenside, unless for a Ph.D.? But plenty of people read Surtees.

Ael. Yes, the early editions are highly priced in the booksellers' catalogues, but that is because of John Leech's illustrations and the collectors' ovine desire for Early Coloured Plates. Nobody, I fancy, reads Surtees, except the sporting illiterates of the Counties, who read nothing else but *The Field*, and perhaps *The Autocar*.

Bar. Don't be uppish. Surtees was good enough for Thackeray and John Gibson Lockhart and William Morris, and lots more of your intellectual as well as your social superiors. Your brilliant youth who convulses his coterie with his subtleties and audacities may be a significant and even an important phenomenon, but the man whose work is read with delight, during three generations, by the multitude of the non-literary, can hardly be brushed aside; and he may have more influence on the world at large. Anyhow, *The Field* contains some of the best periodical writing of our time, and none of the worst—the *worsts* if there is such a plural; there are various kinds of worst—and Surtees was one of the founders of *The Field*, for which we may praise him. And you have enjoyed Surtees yourself: haven't you now?

Ael. Yes, when I read him long ago, but one reads so uncritically at that age.

Bar. Don't we lose as well as gain by academic habits of reading? Come now, what do you object to in him?

Ael. For one obvious thing, his style. Half his writing moves on eighteenth-century stilts, and shaky ones at that, and the other half is mere vulgar rambling, full of the facetious topical jauntiness of the sporting journalist. It dates so badly, and it's so slovenly.

Bar. I grant you both, within reason. He wasn't fastidious by nature or by training, and he lacked a fastidious audience. But isn't there a third kind in him? Doesn't he sometimes

forget both the genteel and the knowing mannerisms when he describes a horse or a hunt, and write clearly and forcibly as he gets excited? Look at bits of *Soapy Sponge* or *Facey Romford*—or for that matter Mr. Jorrocks's own discourses—how he crashes on, over hedge and ditch, sometimes nearly bogged in a complicated series of subordinate clauses, scratched and torn by unrelated participles, sometimes nearly unhorsed trying to take a bit of description faster than the difficult place will allow, but stretching out as the going gets clearer, and coming in at the death with a whoop, and enjoying every minute of it.

Ael. Of course if you're going to talk second-hand hunting-talk, like everybody who even breathes Jorrocks, I'm going to bed.

Bar. Sorry. I take eloquence and twist its neck. No, I won't. I like eloquence. Only, don't let us set too much store by playing with words. When Exalted Critics begin to take the Neo-Euphuists seriously—I mean James Joyce and Gertrude Stein and their imitators, who play monotonously with one or two tricks just as Lyly did, but haven't so many ideas—a natural style is a relief. Ask Professor Saintsbury.

Ael. But allowing that he could write excited prose, think of the construction, or lack of construction, in his so-called novels. The merest picaresque.

Bar. There's a good deal to be said for the picaresque. It's better than a collection of the short stories we used to be so precious about, and more difficult. And isn't life rather picaresque? Suppose you write down your adventures in the War, from your first disastrous interview with a Regular adjutant to what happened the night you were demobilized—won't the result be picaresque?

Ael. Don't make me out a Lazarillo de Tormes. I was a perfectly respectable if entirely undistinguished junior officer of His Majesty's Land Forces, trusty and well-beloved. But even if I agreed, life isn't literature, memoirs aren't novels, and a novel should have some sort of construction about it.

Bar. I suppose so, though I'm tired of young men's novels

that are hugely praised because the bones show through. Surtees always did retain something of the monthly journalist of *The New Sporting Magazine*. All his books are *Jaunts and Jollities*. But we must take what the gods give. His plots haven't the interest of logical relation, or of the working-out of a theme; but they have other virtues. In the picaresque, all the more weight is thrown on incident, because the other interests are discarded; the incidents must be vivid and exciting and real: and those of Surtees are, very, very often. That's something. And in his later works at least, Surtees has the other necessary virtue: ingenuity in the linking-up of his incidents, in devising neat turns and transitions of narrative. Look at *Mr. Facey Romford's Hounds* again, and you'll see how he solved the problem (as the young men from Oxford would say) of showing two different sorts of mastership in one book, by making the same lady and the same horse the cause of Mr. Romford's losing one pack and getting into touch with the other. Surtees is like Spenser in that.

Ael. Congruous comparison!

Bar. I'm full of congruous comparisons. Haven't you noticed that? It's what I call Criticism. Smollett, then, if you jib at Spenser. The Smollett mark is plain to see. You'll notice that Smollett and all his heirs, from Dickens down through Mr. Wells to Mr. Sinclair Lewis, have this about them, that their men have to think about their bread and butter. The Psychological Analysts always omit the two things that make most difference to a man, his job and his current account. Their game lies among people in fairly easy circumstances, and preferably the Upper Middle Classes: otherwise it gets too complicated.

Ael. But aren't these irrelevancies, external things?

Bar. Not a bit. They're interwoven into most of most lives. They're an intrusion sometimes, like Brigade asking for a return of Vermorel Sprayers when your parapet was blown in on half your men, and you were raving about with bombs and sandbags and too worried even to funk. But Brigade had to get its return, and a man has to eat. However, we were discussing Surtees, not Staff-Captains, nor the

psychological complications of *Daily Bread*. There's another mark of the Smollett clan, that the adventures happen among strangers. The hero is usually sent travelling, and is never at home living what you would call a normal social life.

Ael. And a good job too, so far as Surtees is concerned. As a social novelist he is as low as can be, a coarsened caricature of the worst of his friend Thackeray. I grant you he was a man's man. Drawing-rooms aren't his natural habitat. But though his men are usually understandable, he has that hateful common pose of his time, that semi-cynical and wholly patronizing tone about women, the tone of the Regency rake with the edge off. Except for one or two Sporting Females, his women may be classified as the shrewish or the cuddlesome, and I detest both—and the Sporting Female too, for that matter.

Bar. Let us say that he ignored the more subtle and complex movements of human machinery. But isn't this knowledge-of-the-world-my-boy business, like the monstrous eating and still more monstrous drinking, at least in part a question of Fashion—literary Fashion as much as social? We must always remember to allow for Fashion and Snobbery in literature as well as in clothes and manners and surgery. It is true, though, that the social value, the criticism of life, in Surtees, is limited pretty strictly to the one standard—I won't say the only one he knew, for that would obviously be wrong, but the one he allowed to appear in his books—the standard of the gentleman sportsman.

Ael. I groan. I'm weary of sportsmanship. You remember the lectures they used to inflict on us behind the Line, holding up *The Sportsmanship Of The English Public Schoolboy* as a shining ideal for honest journeymen soldiers to adore as an ikon—when men were dying in heaps and the destiny of the world was in the balance, and the generals—all English Public Schoolboys—were intriguing behind one another's backs, and the politicians pretending to govern in chaos? *Tuons le sport!* Chuck it after the *clair de lune*. The English Public Schoolboy is dead already, thank goodness, except perhaps in Kenya.

Bar. I'm very much with you. But remember that England has gone puerile. The first edition of *When We Were Very Young* is worth about six pounds, and moral ideas are at a discount. Talk about Liberty, Patriotism, Duty, Loyalty in public and see what will happen to you. You can talk about Sportsmanship, because it's vague, unintellectual, adolescent, and lazy, and therefore suits the English. But you'll notice I said 'gentleman sportsman'. 'Gentleman' is deader than Public Schoolboy and that's not so lucky. The English have lost all that was valuable in their snobbery and kept the rest. But Surtees had his double standard, and kept his values separate, and that is where he is so superior to the prize-givers and the Indian Army Majors we suffered under. And he meant to make it clear; like every other writer of importance, he regarded his work as instructive as well as recreative—like Sir Philip Sidney, Said He, using another congruous comparison. Because Mr. Facey Romford is a fine horseman and a clever huntsman, scrupulously fair to his horses, his hounds, his foxes, and his field, it does not follow that he is by any means a fine character in other ways; and on the other hand, because Mr. Soapy Sponge is a trifle indelicate in financial affairs, his creator, who made him for the purpose of showing up a shady type of young man, does not deny him certain qualities in the field and even out of it. Indeed, much of his moral and worldly-wise instruction proceeds out of the mouth of his somewhat dubious characters, just as his sporting instruction comes from the entirely comic one of Jorrocks. That makes it the more telling, and also shows his appreciation of the fact that the least admirable of men of this world usually has his code—the good things he will always do, and the evil things he is not fool or blackguard enough to do. He preached sport in itself and for its own sake, which is where the Public School moralists go wrong, for they extend Sportsmanship into fields where it doesn't belong, and simply omit the other worldly virtues altogether because the seventeen-year-olds think they sound 'pi'. *Maxima debetur pueris reverentia*: let us bow to the opinions of the immature.

Ael. But we were talking books, and it's late at night for

moral philosophy. Take it that Surtees showed one virtue in action, and had a deal of the wisdom of the billiard-room. That's a small field and a low one.

Bar. Is there any 'high' and 'low' in art?

Ael. There is in life, anyhow—we seem to be changing places—and, with all deference to Signor Croce, the artist is concerned with life. And unfortunately the horse is usually to be found in lowish surrounding, among Gentlemen Who Always Pay, and most ignoble knaves.

Bar. But not Surtees. He hated all that business. What would *The Sporting and Dramatic*, not to mention *The Daily Herald*, do with a journalist whose only sign of interest, when he was 'covering' Goodwood, was the remark, 'Was much gratified by the scenery'? His recognition of the mixed character was not merely weak tolerance. There were things and people Surtees could not stand: gamblers, dilettante sportsmen whose heart was not in the game, jealous sportsmen, dishonest grooms, and quasi-amateurs who lived by what they pretended was their recreation—he hated them as he hated dirty land and neglected drains, and all the minor dishonesties and slacknesses and insincerities. It is this that makes him so sound, in spite of the drunkennesses and the practical jokes our modern manners dislike. Even at that, he wrote of *The New Sporting Magazine*—here it is in Mr. Cuming's Life of him—'We had expressly stated in our prospectus that Prize-fighting, Bull-baiting, and Cock-fighting were low and demoralizing pursuits, and all reference thereto was to be excluded from our pages.' His idea of sportsmanship is perfectly sound: sport must be free from brutality, an end in itself, with enjoyment as its only reward—he always deprecated the competitive element, as you'll see in the end of *Soupy Sponge*—and he recognized its limitations.

Ael. I've already granted you all that. But it's no great contribution to literature.

Bar. It's a contribution, anyhow. Set Surtees alongside of Thackeray and Dickens, and he appears as a very minor novelist, but he is not obscured by them, or superseded by them, as Scott, for instance, superseded the Clara Reeves and

obscures the Harrison Ainsworths. In his minor class Marryat is a better artist, but Marryat and Surtees do not compete. Must we always be putting writers into a scale of merit? Isn't it more useful sometimes to place them side by side, to see how they fit into each other, what country they cover and whether they overlap? Then, if we must, we can begin classifying according to value. If we take England of the 30's to the 50's—England growing out of the Regency into the Victorian Age—we have Thackeray for middle-class society and journalism; Thomas Love Peacock for literature, finance, ideas; Dickens for the poor and the law; Charlotte Brontë for the Industrial Revolution and Emily for the moorlands; Marryat for the sea, and Surtees for the hunting and farming folk.

Ael. It had been done before. What about Addison's Tory Foxhunter, and Squire Western, and the Osbaldestones? And what about the Border sports in *Guy Mannering*?

Bar. These are all barbarians, looked at from the outside by civilized writers, and as for *Guy Mannering*, Scott had no part in the scientific study of sport that had been interesting English country gentlemen for a generation. Surtees knew it all from the inside; he ranges with Beckford and Colonel Hawker as well as with Smollett and Marryat. And as the mouthpiece of a great and worthy company, their ideas and their interests, he is, recognizably at the first glance, authentic.

Ael. He may have been inside all that, but his characters don't look like it. What was Carlyle's phrase about Scott—that he described people from the outside and not from the inside?

Bar. I think nane the mair o' Tam for that. Any artist is free to choose his own way of doing things, and why not the natural way? We only do see the outsides of people at first, and then, gradually if at all, their appearance, actions, idiosyncrasies, tics and tricks, enable us to build up some idea of what they are like inside. Why should not a novelist present his people in the same way? It was Chaucer's way, and Surtees, like Chaucer, like every writer who writes like a man

of the world and not like a scientist or a theorist, differentiates people first by their clothes, their faces, their tricks of speech, their favourite songs and stories, and so they are all recognizable and consistent, in a human natural sort of way, without becoming abstractions.

Ael. But what are these people? They mean nothing to the great movements of thought of their time or ours. Think of all that happened in Surtees's time, and how little reflection of it there is in his books.

Bar. My dear *Aelius*, remember that most people are oblivious of the great movements of their time. Surely you are old enough to avoid the error of thinking of England in the nineteenth century as inhabited exclusively by Byrons and Shelleys and their victims—so many Castlereaghs—succeeded by a generation of George Eliots and Darwins and Newmans.

Ael. They are the ones who matter; the rest are dead.

Bar. More's the pity, perhaps: we over-concentrate on the picturesque. But anyhow they were alive, and are you, as a democrat, arguing that the majority is negligible? Take a simple case in Surtees: the railway expansion of his time, and its very important social implications—you could make a nice little sketch of social history out of 'The Railways in Literature'. You could show how Thackeray found them vulgar, but amusing for the opportunities they gave of snapshotting people, how they provided Dickens with an arabesque paragraph; how in Peacock's eyes they were the excuse for wild, stupid gambling and cheating. You would have to bring in Surtees, and there you would find they were an abomination because they dirtied the countryside, but at the same time a convenience to a man who wanted to get out of town to hunt, or across country to see a horse. His attitude is quite simple and natural: if people go and build railways for our convenience, we'll use them when it suits our convenience. Not very politically-economical and all that sort of thing, but isn't it how we all regard the railways? There is always a majority of decent ordinary folk, who take things as they come; it is something to be their interpreter.

Ael. And it has the advantage that there's not much to

interpret. You're doing your best, but really, is there anything in Surtees but descriptions of hunting?

Bar. Even if there were nothing else, there we get at his real value. It's more complicated than it looks. First of all notice that when Surtees gets into the country he's in his own element. His young ladies may be insipid, stupid, rapacious; his horses are interesting and sensible individuals. There is nothing factitious about him now, nothing pumped-up, like Wilde, or palpably got up for the occasion, like Sinclair Lewis in *Martin Arrowsmith*. He knew what he was talking about, and once he leaves the attempt at social satire and arrives in his own province—I should say his own *country*—he is absolutely sincere, unconstrained, and therefore admirable. Now he draws on his own experience, from the early journalistic days when he visited famous hunts with a critical eye, to his later life as a dignified squire with the North Riding, the Slaley, and Lord Elcho's. In the country, among horses and hounds, he is back at home—either in the country of his youth round London, or in the North. People argue whether 'Handley Cross' is Leamington or Shotley Bridge; it's probably both. 'Rosebery Rocks' is Brighton. But when it is not Surrey it's Northumberland and Durham and North Yorkshire. The dialect of his countrymen is always the one familiar to him since childhood—James Pigg I've mentioned already. And when he describes a run, the names are made on familiar patterns; wouldn't you look up Tomlinson's *Guide to Northumberland* if some one asked you where are *Corsenside Lane, Howell Burn, Winforth Rig, Birdshope, Kidland Hill*? I've just picked them out of *Handley Cross* here. He remembers days above Slaley, or round Belford, and he plays with names just as Milton did.

Ael. More congruous comparisons!

Bar. And good ones. Surtees uses a name to give flavour and definition to a phrase, just as, I insist, Milton did. Milton liked geography, and Surtees had the huntsman's sense of topography. Mr. Jorrocks may be lost, but his creator never is. Each pack has its country, and though it may be pieced together from different places, the country has definite shape,

features, and directions. It may not be possible to follow a point on the Ordnance Survey map, as you might follow one by *The Field's* report, but that is only because the map happens not to exist, not because the run takes place across a cloud-land or because it is only a series of snapshots. That's more difficult than it sounds, creating an imaginary stretch of country that is convincing, and doing it without elaborate set description and without a map—though maps are delectable things and an ornament to any book—and making the reader gradually acquainted with it, so that he instinctively orientates himself as he reads: that's a triumph. And it isn't enough to be there—a man must see, notice, be keen in wits and senses, to convey the lie of ground and the character of country as Surtees does. You feel the same thing in his weather. There's more English weather in Surtees than anywhere I know, except England. Sometimes he sets himself to describe a particular day, but it's there all the time. The wind of The World Turned Upside Down Day in *Handley Cross* is elaborately described—though not fancifully as Dickens would have done it—but it is usually something so simple and telling that I could scarcely pick it out for you. Here's a scrap in *Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour*: 'Who does not know the chilling feel of an English spring, or rather of a day at the turn of the year before there is any spring? Our gala-day was a perfect specimen of the order—a white frost, succeeded by a bright sun, with an east wind, warming one side of the face and starving the other. It was neither a day for fishing, nor hunting, nor coursing, nor anything but farming. The country, save where there were a few lingering patches of turnips, was all one dingy drab, with abundant scalds on the undrained fallows. The grass was more like hemp than anything else. The very rushes were yellow and sickly.' That's the North: and so simply done, no fine writing, no arabesque, no pumping-up: just the farmer's eye and the feel on your skin. Don't tell me that man couldn't write. And when we remember that this is the prologue to the description of a steeple-chase, a thing Surtees loathed and despised, don't tell me he knew nothing about the art of ironical planning.

Ael. Suppose I grant the authenticity of his horses and hunts and coverts and so on. I'm told hunting-folk swear by him. Then I ask, what is that to you? You admit yourself that he is a very minor novelist, and good only in the hunting-field. Do you then have three days a week and a bye-day with the Tynedale or the Braes of Derwent?

Bar. Not by quite a bit. The only times I ever got across a horse were when my Colonel said I jolly well had to. But don't you see? That's just it! I don't hunt; I don't even ride on the Town Moor: and I read Surtees with something warmer than mere pleasure.

Ael. Isn't it Mr. Birrell who describes the gentle lady at the dinner-party lamenting the decadence of the prize-fighters of England? She was bemused with Borrow; you seem to be bemused with Surtees. There was more excuse for her.

Bar. Perhaps: but the cause is the same. Borrow and Surtees have the one great and essential gift—enthusiasm, gusto, zest—call it what you like. The real gusto that is fed on experience, on the beef of life and not the red peppers and cocktails. . . . And you'll notice a queer thing: with all our English sportiveness, there's mighty little of this enthusiasm for sport in creative literature. Mr. Neville Cardus on cricket and Mr. Bernard Darwin on golf are delightful, though I can't play cricket and won't play golf: but their work is commentary, and there isn't a football match in all Modern English Literature that would stir the pulse of a flea. Fishing and hunting alone seem to supply real gusto.

Ael. So. Just as the Gentlemen Who Always Pay are necessary to English horse-breeding, so blood-sports are necessary to English Literature. You'd better explain that to the R.S.P.C.A.

Bar. I'm not arguing; I'm merely stating an observed fact, like Dr. Einstein. You golf—I've heard you bragging about your approach at the ninth and so on—now golf has the great advantage of being a primitive game, in which you employ skill to defeat distance, weather, and vegetation; and the employment of skill is the sheerest of joys, and, if the spiritualistic aestheticians would only believe it, a main

element in art. But you also fish, which is the saving of you. Now tell me: isn't the thrill of holing a long putt quite different from the thrill of playing a lively trout?

Ael. Ye-es, yes. But where does that get us to?

Bar. This. England being a badly over-populated country, the English exercise themselves in artificial ball-games, played within certain arbitrary rules devised merely to enforce a certain appropriate kind of skill, and no other. Even the Queensberry Rules are designed to ensure that only the proper kind of skill is exhibited, so that there may be a fight worth watching. So the English idea of sportsmanship is, two sides or two men or two young ladies—known to every cheap reporter by their Christian names—playing a game according to the rules. In fishing and hunting you play according to nature.

Ael. And so you have tumbled into two fallacies at once: 'playing the game' doesn't mean keeping the rules. It's above and beyond the rules. And I don't fish for burn trout with salmon-tackle—nor do you—and yet there are no rules in fishing except the laws of the land, which are devised to ensure that there be any trout left to fish for.

Bar. There's no fallacy. 'Playing the game' means following a certain code of courtesy prescribed by public opinion, which would equally condemn your heavy tackle. But you assume that your opponent is also 'playing the game', and you ostracize him if he doesn't. You don't expect short-rising trout to leap ashore in contrition, or a fox to apologize and count himself out for fouling the line among sheep. In these natural pursuits, though you may impose restrictions on yourself in order to get the maximum thrill out of them, you are prepared for anything from the other side.

Ael. I maintain you are three-deep in fallacies—but we were discussing Surtees, not sportsmanship.

Bar. We were discussing the peculiar gusto of Surtees, a gusto shared by other sporting writers, each in his degree. And my point is this, that in life and in literature, wherein life is the quarry, you are dealing with nature, not playing an artificial game according to arbitrary and universally under-

stood rules. That's why 'cricket' emasculated English foreign policy and sent you and me into the Line, and that's why so many modern novelists are dull. They are eternally thinking of the rules of the game, and there aren't any. So one page of St. John's *Wild Sports in the Highlands* makes *Point-Counter-Point* look like a six-cylinder motor-engine decorated with lip-stick, and so Surtees in the hunting-field, being natural, is full of that peculiar thrill you get from rising and playing a good fish, but don't get from holing the longest of putts. And it's got to be there, whether you are stalking deer on the hill or character in a pub—the thing that's so much needed just now, that's so difficult to communicate and yet can be communicated so subtly and so completely—the thing Smollett had, the love of the spectacle of life, even if it were only two blackguards kicking one another—the thing Jane Austen had, though it were only a lady and gentleman conversing over breakfast—the thing all the great ones had—gusto, enthusiasm, infectious zest for just being.

Ael. You were Crocean and are now Tolstoyan—the infection theory.

Bar. Infection fact—only don't think it accounts for everything—and Tolstoy had it too. Experience and gusto: there's the formula for the novel, though it's no good to the American University Courses or the coteries on the *terrasse* of the Rotonde.

Ael. Then I'm to tell all my young literary friends to study Surtees and be saved?

Bar. Yes. And Henry James. And Marcel Proust. And Thackeray and Stendhal and Sterne and Fielding and a whole lot more. And have them observe that all these great ones have beef on their bones.

It is late, and we may leave them arguing.

W. L. RENWICK.

ENGLISH PLACE-NAMES AND THEIR PRONUNCIATION¹

THE problem of the correct pronunciation of English, often discussed in the past alike by scholars and by amateurs, became a matter of intense practical importance with the advent of universal elementary education and widespread intercommunication between one part of the country and another. Such a scheme of education and such intercourse brought with them their inevitable concomitant, viz. the idea of some form of English which should be universally used and understood, alike by those who gave and by those who received this education.

The need for some such universal medium was greatly intensified when the invention of broadcasting gave to the spoken, as against the written, word an importance which it had long ceased to have. If broadcasting was to fulfil its natural function it must reach as large an audience as possible, with the minimum possibility of misunderstanding, and the Broadcasting Corporation had not long been in existence before it set up a committee which should guide speakers and audiences alike to that end.

The lines upon which such a committee would have to work had already been indicated by such scholars as Jespersen. He had pointed out that there was no absolute standard of

¹ The material for this paper is for the most part derived from the collections, published and unpublished, of the English Place-name Survey. The counties to which the place-names quoted belong are indicated by the following abbreviations :—Beds, Bk (Buckinghamshire), D (Devon), Db (Derbyshire), Ess, Gl (Gloucestershire), Hu (Huntingdonshire), Nb (Northumberland), Nth (Northamptonshire), St (Staffordshire), Sx (Sussex), Wo (Worcestershire). Pronunciations are indicated as far as possible by phonetic spellings found in earlier documents, the date of the document being given in brackets immediately after. Phonetic symbols are only used where they have been found to be absolutely necessary.

correctness in these matters, that the general standard must be the speech of educated persons, that the norm must be one of practice rather than of precept, and that in all doubtful cases we must proceed by rejecting pronunciations suggestive of any particular class or locality. This has in actual practice been the method of the British Broadcasting Corporation committee. Just at first there was a touch of artificiality, and even of pedantry, in some of the pronunciations to which they gave their sanction, but in their more recent pronouncements in these matters there are clear indications of their acceptance, in cases of doubt, of the practice of the majority of educated persons, and of the abandonment of the attempt to govern the language by rules or precepts.

In a recent pamphlet the committee attempts to deal with yet another problem of pronunciation, viz. that of our place-names, and to secure some measure of standardization such as will facilitate the work they have in hand. Once again the question is raised, 'What is the correct pronunciation of this or that name? What should be the standard or norm by which we should determine the pronunciation of this or that name?' These are matters upon which there is often acute difference of opinion, and, roughly speaking, the choice in most cases lies between a pronunciation based (in varying degrees of phonetic strictness) upon local usage, and one originally suggested by the spelling, now often used in the locality itself and, again and again, used alike nationally and locally by persons whom it would be idle to brand as uneducated. Or, to put the problem in more concrete form, are we to pronounce *Daventry* (Nth) as *Daintree* (1620) or as [dæventri], *Newcastle* (Nb) as [nju'kæsl] or as ['nju'ka:sl], or, in its extreme form, are we to pronounce *Seaford* (Sx) as [zi'vuəd] or as ['si:fəd]?

In discussing this problem we may note at the outset that it cannot be solved on the lines adopted for ordinary words. In spite of all difficulties and uncertainties it is comparatively easy to determine the pronunciation of the words which find their way into our dictionaries. The common words are in such widespread use that it is easy to discover the form they

take on the lips of educated persons, while the rarer words (scientific terms and the like) are, by their very nature, only used by those who may be presumed to know how to pronounce them. On the other hand there is no reason why the educated man or woman should, during his or her whole life, use or hear any but the tiniest proportion of our place-names. There are vast numbers which will never come within his ken, of which he is never likely either to hear or make mention, so that, except in the case of the names of important places, there can be no question of determining the pronunciation by the standard of general usage. Place-names like *Norwich*, *Gloucester*, *Warwick*, may be regarded as part of the speech-equipment of any educated Englishman, but what reason is there, so far as we are at present aware, why, without in any way wishing to minimize the importance of these places, there should ever be a national as distinct from a local pronunciation of the Devon *Woolfardisworthy*, otherwise *Woolsery* (1686), the Derbyshire *Beauchief*, otherwise *Beachiff* (1600), or the Northumbrian *Haltwhistle*, otherwise *Hoate-whistle* (1655), or, to take a series of names of places of intervening rank, who shall determine at what stage we may admit a standard pronunciation [saierənsestə] for *Cirencester* (Gl) as against the local *Cissiter* (1675), and deny it to the person who first claims that for broadcasting purposes *Alnwick* (Nb) must lose its local pronunciation (ænik) in favour of a more reasonable [æln(w)ik] or that the river *Coquet* in Northumberland must cease to be called [koukit] and fall into line with the standard English pronunciation of *coquette*, for that is how your educated Englishman, not born in the locality, inevitably tries to pronounce it?

In the lively preface by Mr. Lloyd James to the Broadcasting Corporation's pamphlet on the pronunciation of some English place-names, he suggests that those local patriots who protest against the pronunciation of *Daventry* as [dæventri] rather than [deintrɪ] have the remedy in their own hands. If they will respell the name as *Daintry*, then the desired pronunciation will establish itself automatically. This line of argument does not seem to give justice all round. Why

should Mr. Lloyd James allow *Alnwick* and *Ulgham* to retain their local pronunciations [ænik] and *Uffham* (1812), though they have not changed their spellings, and deny the privilege to, let us say, *Uttowæter* (St) and *Walthamstow* (Ess) in which he gives his preference to the spelling pronunciations [ʌt'oksetər] and [wɔ:lθəmstou] as against older *Utcheter* (15th) and [wɔ'təmstou] ?

The truth is that it is exceedingly difficult to lay down any general principles upon which this matter may be decided, and if the problem of the correct pronunciation of the words of the ordinary English vocabulary is difficult, that of the correct pronunciation of our place-names is tenfold harder, and that for many good reasons.

In the first place, our place-names have in the course of their history undergone changes of pronunciation a good deal more violent than those experienced by ordinary words. There are very few native English words which have ever had since Anglo-Saxon times more than two or three syllables. Words of more syllables than that are generally of foreign origin, and tend to be used only by those who are learned in those languages, so that they usually retain something of their full syllabic value. In place-names, owing largely to their composite character, there is no such limitation upon the number of syllables, and soon the natural tendencies of human speech lead to a cutting down of such names. *Doddyscombsleigh* (D) is spelled *Dascomley* (1628) and is still so pronounced. Similarly, *Wivelsfield* (Sx), *Meppershall* (Beds), *Wyrardisbury* (Bk), *Doverdale* (Wo), *Badgworthy* (D), are spelled *Wylsfelde* (1580), *Mepsall* (1610), *Wraysbury* (1536), *Dordale* (1558), *Butchery* (1651), and the pronunciations indicated by these spellings still prevail locally. Again and again, however, in these names the fuller form has been retained on our modern maps and other modern documents, and the inevitable tendency is to pronounce them as they are spelled. *Sheriff's Lench* (Wo) is no longer pronounced *Shrewlinch* (1560). It is very difficult to hear the pronunciation of *Felmersham* (Beds) which is indicated by *Fensam* (1549), and impossible now to recover the pronunciation of *Abbotsley* (Hu) as

Aubsley (1561). The present writer could not recover the pronunciation of *Cramlington* (Nb) as *Cramelton* (1292) by the most diligent local inquiry, until chance mention by a local man of an air-raid at Cramlington brought out, all unconsciously, the long-sought-for pronunciation.

The pronunciations so far indicated are concerned chiefly with a reduction in the number of syllables in a name. Another common cause of variation is to be found in the tendency to simplify a consonant group, whether an original one or one which has arisen from the loss of one or more intervening unstressed vowels. *Ripton* (Hu) becomes *Rippon* (1675), *Eynesbury* (Hu) becomes *Aisbury* (c. 1600). So similarly *Comberton* (Wo), *Limbersey* (Beds), *Hardmead* (Bk), *Jurston* (D), *Evesham* (Wo), are reduced to *Commer-ton* (1577), *Limersey* (1766), *Harmede* (1520), *Jesson* (1765), *Esam* (1675), but it is by no means easy to hear these pronunciations nowadays. Izaak Walton tells us that Sussex boasts of *Amerley* trout. It is doubtful if they would be so called in the *Amberley* of to-day, and, though the present writer has known *Fordwich* by Canterbury for many years, he has never heard speak of its trout as *Fordidge* trout, as they should be according to the same authority.

Similarly, many assimilations commonly made in the past and still at times heard locally, as *Snodgbury* (1700) for *Snodsbury* (Wo), [idʒli] for *Iddesleigh* (D) are now often regarded as vulgarisms, though in some names, as in *Quedgeley* (Gl), *Hedgeley* (Nb), and *Bridgemere* (Ch), these 'vulgar' forms have received the imprimatur of our maps and gazetteers, and no one would think of using the older and etymologically more correct forms with *ds*.

Two particular collocations of consonants have led to two series of very common but entirely artificial pronunciations. An *s*, usually genitival in origin, often comes before the *h* of a second unstressed element *-ham* or *-hale*. There is a universal tendency to pronounce these names as though they contained the sound *sh*, and not the sound *s* followed by an *h* which by a normal phonological development has become silent. *Horsham* (Sx) is now rarely pronounced as *Horsom*

(1651), *Somersham* (Hu) equally rarely as *Somersam* (1549), and it is doubtful if *Bosham* (Sx) would still be pronounced as *Bozam* (1628) if it were not that the only alternative would be an unhappy pronunciation with initial *Bosh-*. It is but rarely that one now hears *Chesum* (1675) for *Chesham* (Bk), or *Lurgesall* (1627) for *Ludgershall* (Bk), a pronunciation which has luckily so far survived in the identical name *Lurgashall* (Sx).

The other collocation is that of *t* followed by *h*. Here the inevitable tendency is to replace the old pronunciation of *Waltham* (Sx) or (Ess) as *Waltome* (1641) by a spelling pronunciation with the *th* of *thin*, and *Walthamstow* (Ess) has, by association with the not very distant *Waltham*, inevitably followed suit, so that its old pronunciation as [wɔːtəmstou] is now a thing of the past.

A medial *l* is almost inevitably assimilated or vocalized in certain combinations, and we ought to speak of the homes of Milton and Cowper respectively as *Chafunt* (1675) and *Oune*y (1207), but doubtless it would savour of the pedantic to do so now. Similarly, the correct pronunciation of *Bolney* (Sx) and *Balcombe* (Sx) is indicated in the spellings *Bounye* (1603) and *Bawcombe* (1688), found in parish registers. Fortunately these are still in common use, but one cannot say how long they will survive.

The loss of *h* at the beginning of an unstressed second element in English place-names is almost universal, but there is now a widespread tendency to restore it. The giving up of the pronunciation of *Amphill* (Beds) as *Amptell* (1535) or *Pertenhall* (Beds) as *Partnale* (16th) is doubtless due to our fear that if we 'drop an *h*' we shall be branded as uneducated. No such fears need have led us to restore the *w* in *Chaddle* (1826) for *Chadwell* (Bk), or *Spaldicke* (1583) for *Spaldwick* (Hu), *Braddis* (1595) for *Broadwas* (Wo), *Sallop* (1590) for *Salwarpe* (Wo), but doubtless the *w* will be universally heard in these names in the course of the next few years.

Final consonants tend to disappear. Thus *d* was at one time lost in *Weald* (Bk), written *Weale* (1766), *Chickson* (1655) for *Chicksand* (Beds), *Glyne* (1587) for *Glynde* (Sx).

Similarly *t* disappeared in *Dunklin* (1577) for *Duncleint* (Wo), *th* in *Benger* for *Bengeworth* (Wo), *f* in the well-known *Hockley-in-the-Hole* of the Elizabethans, now *Hockliffe* (Beds). In all these names present-day custom has restored the lost consonantal sound.

These names illustrate universal tendencies in our speech, independent of questions of dialect, but those tendencies have much fuller play in place-names than in ordinary significant words, because the elements from which the words are built up are often no longer recognizable, and so the meaning of the element or elements of which they are composed exercises little or no control over their pronunciation.

The curious way in which the full original form of a place-name and its normal abbreviated phonetic development may remain distinct from one another owing to the lack of any obvious semantic connexion is shown by some interesting pairs of forms of the same original name, to be found side by side with one another in the present-day map. In Middlesex *Hornsey* and *Harringay* are really one and the same; in Essex we have, side by side, *Bobbingworth* and *Bovinger*, *Aldborough Hatch* and *Abery House*; in Worcestershire we have *Warshell Top Farm* and *Wassell Wood*, *Dordule* and *Doverdale*, the latter two not close together but lying on the same stream, once called *Dover*; in Northamptonshire we have *Sewardsley* (*Shewarsley* in 1585) and *Showsley Belt*, *Ludwell* and *Luddle Barn*. In Devon, close by the standard English *Whitefield*, we have the true local *Whettivale* (*Down*), so also *Cadworthy Farm* and *Cadover Bridge*. *Stinhall* and *Stiniel* (from the OE. *stānen heall*, 'stone-built hall') are adjacent, with a *Stenhall* some distance away, while *Shaden Moor*, earlier *Shaugh Down Moor*, preserves the local pronunciation of *Shaugh* (*Prior*) as [ʃei]. Railway companies are usually ultra-conservative and respectable in the forms of the names they attach to their railway stations, but it is to be counted for grace to the Great Western Railway that it still calls its station *Yelverton*, while the neighbouring farm is named by the standard English form *Elfordtown*. In Sussex *Aburton Farm* is in *Edburton* parish, and the two

forms represent divergent developments of the same name, going back to the thirteenth century, while *High and Over* represents a curious expansion of the neighbouring (and more normal) *Hindover (Hill)*.

The variant forms which we have so far dealt with are for the most part due to normal phonological developments such as we might expect in any part of the country, checked from time to time by the influence of spelling forms. Another important series of variants arises from the existence of definite dialectal forms side by side with forms which have been more or less standardized. At first one might be inclined to suggest that in pronouncing our place-names we need hardly concern ourselves with such evident localisms as the following, drawn for illustration's sake from Sussex records: *Foord* (1580) for *Ford*, *Mavell* (1570) for *Mayfield*, *Arndle* (1788) for *Arundel*, *Seafourd* (1601) for *Seaford*, but the last spelling serves at least to tell us that the characteristic Sussex pronunciation of place-names with stress on the second element goes back to Elizabethan times, and one has to remember that again and again purely dialectal forms have survived on the modern map. *Turville* (Bk) is not a name of French origin, but represents an earlier *Turfield* with dialectal *v* for *f* and common colloquial loss of final *d*. We may condemn the pronunciation of *ash* as [aʃ] or *ass* as [aʃ] as purely dialectal, indeed almost vulgar, but we must remember that the dialectal pronunciation of *ash* survives in the present-day map in *Arscott* (D), which we all know from *Uncle Tom Cobley*, while a compound of *ass* and *ton* has given us *Arson* in the same county, and Drayton *Parslow* (Bk) contains the OFr personal name *Passelewe* (often latinized as *Passaquam*). Are we to pronounce *Zempson* in Dean Prior (D) as standard English *Simpson* because, not far off, there is a *Simpson* in Diptford with exactly the same ultimate derivation, viz. from Old English *Sigewinestūn*, or should both alike be pronounced with initial [z]? Old English *hrēod* 'reed' has become standard English *reed*, and gives us a Devon place-name *Reed*, called *Reed* in a Fine of 1686, but *Rood* in a map of 1765. Is this any argument for giving up another Devon place-name, viz.

Rhude, which ultimately goes back to the same word? We must frankly admit that our present-day maps are full of pure dialectal forms, though it is noteworthy that they are far more common in a county like Devon, remote from the standardizing force of London speech, than, let us say, in Sussex.

How inconsistent our maps are in these matters is illustrated by the fact that out of more than fifty examples of the element *fen* in Devon place-names, some forty-four contain the dialectal form *ven*, while, of nine examples of *Merryfield*, only one appears on the modern map with a *v*, viz. *Merrivale*. Or again, *Fynning* in Rogate and *Vining* (*Rough*) in Easebourne (Sx) contain the same common word, but *Fynning* appears as *Vining* on Greenwood's map of 1823, and *Vining* as *Finning* on the same map. The common word *row* has a dialectal variant *rew* found more than once in the place-name *Rew* (D), but *w* in Devon dialect is often confused with a *v*, so that it appears as *Reeve* in one instance on the present-day map, though that place is called 'Rew otherwise Row' in 1750.

We must not despise these dialectal spellings, for at times place-names preserve rare dialectal forms which have almost disappeared from present-day speech. *Honeyburge* (Bk) preserves a rare metathesized form of South Midland Middle English *brugge* in place of standard English *bridge*. Standard English *hill* has entirely ousted the dialectal *hull*, which one ought to find over large areas in the south and south midlands, and *ridge* has similarly almost ousted *rudge*. In place-names, however, we have *Hull Farm* (Wo), while *Rull* is fairly common in Devon. Here the coalescence of *at ther hulle* to *at the rulle* has effectively disguised all connexion with the common word *hill*, and the dialectal *hull* has survived by reason of the protective covering which it has assumed. *Rudge* is less common but has managed to survive in a few examples. A good example of protective covering is to be found in the numerous Devon place-names containing the common word *old* as their first element. Compounded with *land* it has given us seven places called *Yelland*, a *Yalland*,

a *Yolland*, and a *Yellowland*. Compounded with *dun* (= down) it has given three places called *Youlden* and three called *Youldon*. The common development of the initial dialectal [j] before the vowel has effectively disguised all connexion with the word *old*, and a whole series of purely dialectal forms have survived. On the other hand, few examples of Anglian *wall* or Devon *will* for *well* have survived in place-names, because association with the common word *well* so readily suggests itself.

No trace is to be found in Wright's *English Dialect Grammar* of a dialectal form *crew* for *crow*, which must at one time have been common in Devon. There are some sixteen examples of this word as a first element in Devon place-names. *Craythorne*, *Creaber*, two *Creacombs*, *Crealake*, *Crebar*, *Creber*, *Crebor*, *Creely*, *Creelake*, *Creyford*, preserve the dialectal form, probably because the sound was sufficiently remote from that of standard English *crow* to prevent ready association of the two forms.

The last series perhaps indicates sufficiently the importance of preserving as far as possible even those pronunciations which are definitely dialectal in character, and, though it may be impossible ultimately to preserve them, we should certainly be doing an ill turn to the historians of our language if we were over active in suppressing them.

The solving of the etymology of *Hove* (Sx) would have been far more difficult than it was, had we not the knowledge that the local pronunciation is still *Hoove* (1675), which must go back to an Old English *hufe*, and not to an Old English word with *o* at all; while the spelling *Hewards Hoth* (1705) for *Haywards Heath* reminds us that the true local pronunciation is still [hjuədʒːhəʊð], and that the second element in the name is really not *heath* at all, but the allied *hoath*, which is found in East and West *Hoathly*, written *Horthlygh(t)* in 1527. One might even put in a plea for the preservation of those forms which from time to time find their way on to our maps or our documents, and suggest a vulgar as distinct from a dialectal pronunciation, if we may legitimately differentiate them. *Shippen* is a common dialectal word for a cowshed.

Are we to accept the respectable form *Shippen* in which it appears in one place on the Devon map, and reject the vulgar *Shipping* which it takes in another? Who shall say whether *Hard-to-find Farm* in Ibstone (Bk) is an etymologizing of *Harty Foine* (1796), i.e. Hearty Fine, or *Harty Foine* a colloquial version of *Hard-to-find*.

At the outset of this discussion it was suggested that this problem of alternative pronunciations of place-names was one which had taken its rise from universal elementary education and ever-growing communication between one part of the country and another. That is in large measure true, but one must remember that long before this divergence between spelling pronunciation and local pronunciation arose, there were numerous divergences even in the locality itself, and that different dialectal forms might long contest for the mastery among themselves. The only form that we have for *Wansford* (Hu) going back to Anglo-Saxon times is *Wylmesford*, which contains, not the Anglian *wælm* which we should expect from its position in Middle Anglia, but the West Saxon *wylm*, which must be due to the West Saxon clerk who wrote out the charter. This form is an isolated one which played no part in the subsequent history of the name, but sometimes these variations were long lived and might be serious in their consequences. Sometimes it is a case of a struggle between an old form and a more modern one. The clerk who had to make mention of proceedings at *Holsworthy* (D) in an Assize Roll of 1330, to make things quite certain, speaks of it as *Holdisworth et non Haldisworth*; or again there may be uncertainty as to the correct form of the personal name which formed the first element in a place-name, and the clerk, fighting what proved ultimately to be a losing battle, says of something that happened at *Edginswell* (D), that it happened in *Eggeswille et non in Eggeneswille* (1325). More often the trouble is over variant dialectal forms. *Shute* in *Shobrooke* (D) in its Middle English forms varies persistently between the forms *shete* and *shute*, from Old English *sciete*, 'nook or corner'. In 1321 there was a dispute about the ownership of land here, and one of the parties contended that

the land was in *la Shute et non in la Shete*. So with reference to *Grandborough* (Bk), which had variant forms *Grenesbury* and *Grenesborow*, due to long uncertainty whether the second unstressed element was *byrig*, 'fort', or *beorg*, 'hill', the sheriff had, in the fourteenth century, to hold an inquiry as to the identity of the places so named, and the jurors declared on oath that the two were one and the same and not two different villis.

The struggle between these variant forms often continued to a late date. In Sussex there are two forms of the common word *new*, viz. the ordinary *new*, which is characteristic of the eastern half of the county, and the rare *nye*, which is found only in its western half. They freely interchange in the forms of Sussex place-names, and *Nyetimber* in Pagham is *Nitymbre* al. *Neutymbre* as late as 1508. The well-known variant dialectal developments of Old English *y* to Middle English *e*, *i*, or *u*, and of Old English *eo* to *e*, *u*, find their echoes in *Pephurst* (Sx) which is *Pephurst* al. *Pubhurst* (1640), *Sullington* (Sx) which is *Sullington* al. *Sillington* (1641), while the well-known *Lustleigh* (D) still appears as *Listleigh* otherwise *Lustleigh* otherwise *Lisley* in 1749.

Rich store of these variant forms is to be found in documents of the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, more especially in such legal records as Feet of Fines and Recovery Rolls, though they are by no means rare in other documents, such as maps, parish registers, and the like.

It is clear that some of these variants are only recorded in the document for the sake of legal completeness, probably in order to avoid any such disputes as those mentioned above. If you give a place all the name-forms it has ever had, you may be presumed to have pinned it down safely enough even for the lawyers. There is, except perhaps to the legal mind, little that is important in referring to *Goringlee* (Sx) as *Goringley* alias *Goringlegh* (1555), or *Keymelford* (D) as *Kemelford* otherwise *Keymelford*, otherwise *Kembleford*, otherwise *Kemylford* (1754). More readily explicable is the recording of variant long and short forms, e.g. *Crediton* al.

Kirton (1637), *Crediton vulgo Keerton* (1675), *Frithelstock* (D) alias *Fristocke* (t. Jas. I), *Wivelsfield* (Sx) otherwise *Wylsfeld* (1580), though it should be remembered in such cases that, in spite of the *vulgo*, the shortened pronunciations were probably in almost universal use even among the gentry, as in the case of the undergraduate who matriculated at Gonville Caius College in 1601 and gave the name of his birthplace as *Curton*, i.e. *Crediton*.

Sometimes the variant forms represent a long struggle between divergent developments. *Alston* (D) is called *Almeston* al. *Alson* al. *Alveston* in 1686, the first and last forms representing different developments of Old English *Ælfhilmestūn*. *Mugworthy* (D) is called *Muffery* al. *Muggery* al. *Mugworthy* al. *Muckworthy* (1809). An original intervocalic [k] in some such earlier form as *Muccanworþig* has hesitated between two common developments. viz. to continuant *gh* which ultimately became *f* (as in *enough*), and voiced *g* (as in dialectal *Bragglesham* (1635) for *Bracklesham* (Sx)).

A good many of these alternative forms are clearly due to oral tradition rather than documentary evidence. It is only in that way that we can explain such alternatives as *Thakeham* (Sx) al. *Fakeham* (1641), *Beddingham* (Sx) al. *Berringham* (1739), *Pevensey* (Sx) al. *Pemsey* (1639), *Goosnoll* al. *Courtesknolle* (1767) for *Curtisknowle* (D), *Walworthie* al. *Walford* (t. Eliz.) for *Wallaford* (D), which is really a *worthy*-name.

This last series of forms serves to remind us how important is oral tradition in the history of our place-names, in spite of all the influence of the written word, of standard English speech, and all the normalizing tendencies. Lawyers and map-makers alike again and again fell a prey to the snares which lurk in the oral form, and use, we might almost say invent, forms which have no historical justification. There was once a farm in Devon of which the full name was *Greatworthy*, which, in accordance with the usual Devon practice, was reduced in pronunciation to *Greatery*. This now appears on the map as *Great Tree*. The old Ordnance Survey map

(c. 1830) spells *Austcliff* and *Caunsall* (Wo) as *Horsecliff* and *Cornsall*, and doubtless its makers prided themselves on the restoration of a lost *h* in the first name. So, similarly, a horse wrongly makes its way into two Devon place-names *Horsewell*, earlier *Halswill*, doubtless pronounced [hɑːswəl] and containing the common Devon *halse*, 'hazel'. *White's Plot* (D) is an ingenious attempt to render intelligible an earlier *Whytsplatt* (1520), containing the dialectal *splat* or *splot*, 'piece of land'. One can only explain the curious name *Manhood* for the Sussex hundred which embraces the Selsey peninsula, if one remembers that its old name *Manwood* would locally be pronounced [mænud], and that some purist imagined this had lost an *h* and so wrote it *Manhode* (1610). Such re-spellings have often taken place regardless of the true topography of the place. *Hankham* (Sx) lies in the flats of the Pevensey Levels, but close at hand is *Handcombe Hall*, in which some ingenious person has introduced a spelling suggesting the presence of a *combe*. The addition of a final *d* in *Renhold* (Beds.), earlier *Renhall*, illustrates the same oral vulgarism that we find in *vild* for *vile*, while the innumerable examples of such forms as *Noke* and *Nash*, *Roke* or *Rock* for *oak* and *ash*, *Tapps* for *asp(en)*, *Rull* and *Rill* for *hill*, take their rise from the common colloquial practice of running on the final consonant of one word into the initial vowel of the next. *Fingest* (Bk) for earlier *Thinghurst* is a good example of *f* for *th*, which nearly gave us also *Frogmorton* (1696) for *Throckmorton* (Wo). Similar colloquial confusion of *t* and *k* given us *Crabbet Park* (Sx), earlier *Crabwick*, the home of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, while *Collett's Green* (Wo) is for earlier *Collicke* (17th cent.) and *Cholic* (!) in a map of 1820. Similarly, one can only explain the extraordinary confusion to be found in Devon names between *ford* and *worthy*, whereby, for example, *Ponsford* has become *Ponsworthy* and *Wallworthy* has become *Wallafor*, when we remember that colloquially *ford* in an unstressed syllable will become *ver*, while in Devon dialect *worth* will similarly become *ver*. When the scribe has to commit these names to writing he will indifferently expand the *ver* to *ford* or *worth*, and, to give the

name a still more characteristic Devon touch, may well turn *worth* into *worthy*.

In these last names the map-maker or the writer has deliberately tried to rid himself of any trace of dialect, at least in the spelling of the name. Such efforts have often led to strange results when the map-maker thinks he is faced by a dialect form which, all unknown to him, is good standard English. There are three places in Devon now called respectively *Downstow*, *Hestow*, and *Winstow*. These are all, as a matter of fact, compounds of the common Devon *torr*. The person responsible for these forms heard the correct pronunciations *Downster*, *Hester*, and *Winster*, was clearly revolted by what he took to be a vulgar pronunciation of *stow*, and proceeded to rewrite these names as they now stand. So, similarly, there is a place in Buckinghamshire now called *Botolph Claydon*. The history of this name is that it is really a compound name derived from two adjacent settlements called respectively *Bottle* from Old English *botl*, 'building', and *Claydon*. Some time early in the nineteenth century some learned person, familiar with the common reduction of the well-known Anglo-Saxon saint's name *Botolph* to *Bottle*, conceived that *Bottle* in *Bottle Claydon* must be a vulgarism for the saint's name, and so it appears in the first Ordnance Survey map as *Claydon St. Botolph* (c. 1825), and now as *Botolph Claydon*.

With this varied evidence before us, it is clear that there never has been, nor can there ever be, a standard pronunciation of our place-names taken as a whole, and that it is impossible to lay down any general principles. All one can say is, in the first place, for the vast majority of place-names the only pronunciation which has any warrant is the local pronunciation, though under present conditions of life that local pronunciation is often very difficult to discover in its genuine unadulterated form. Secondly, that in cases of doubt spelling pronunciations are the least authoritative of all, for spelling has never, except in cases of deliberate perversion or unconscious blunder, determined the pronunciation of English words, or, to put it in another way, the pronunciation of a place-

name which is least like that suggested by its spelling is most likely to be the correct one; and thirdly, that if we wish to preserve the heritage of our English place-names intact and in a form which may be of service alike to the historians of our land and of our language, we must in all cases of doubt err on the side of a genuine conservatism in pronunciation.

ALLEN MAWER.

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BY JOHN JOHNSON, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

